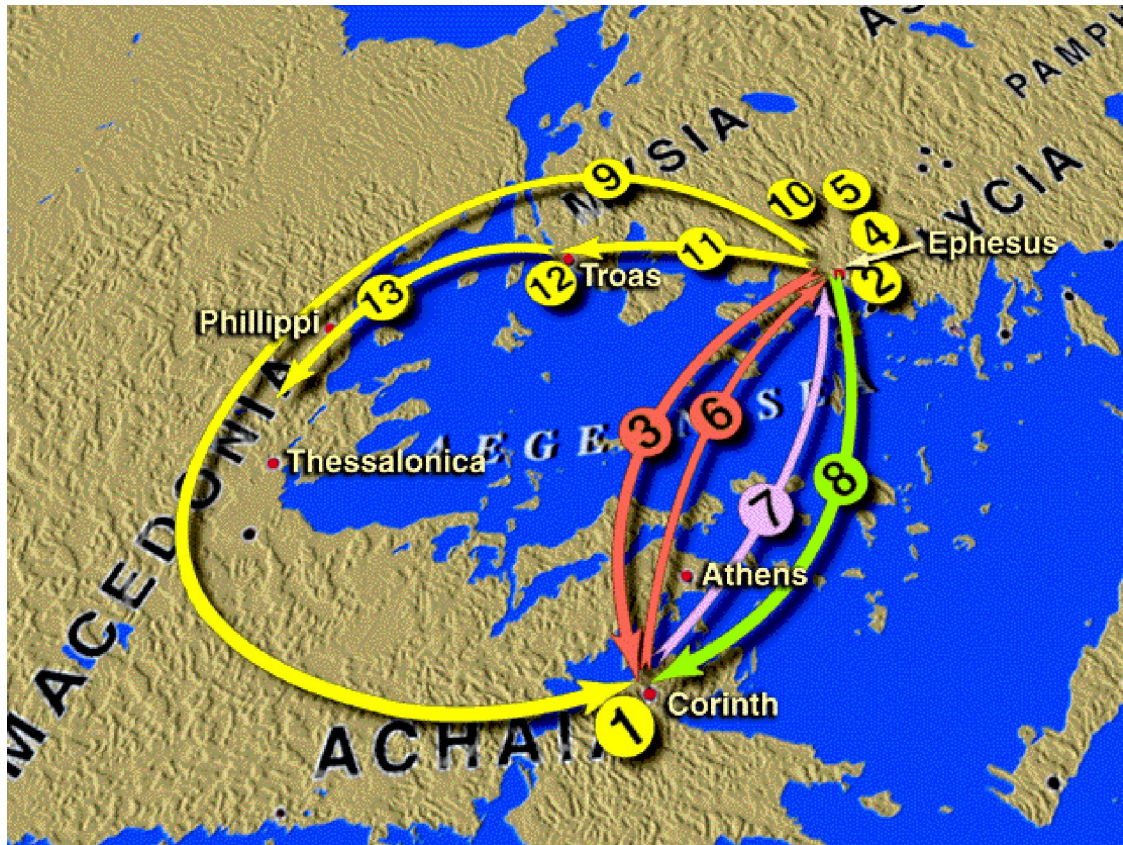


Paul's Letters to the Corinthian Church



Events Associated With Paul's Letters to the Corinthian Church, c. A.D. 57

The First Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the **CORINTHIANS** **INTRODUCTION**

1

1. Title. Textual evidence attests (cf. p. 10) the title *Pros Korinthious A*, literally, “To the Corinthians A [or “I”]”. This shorter title is found in the manuscript on 1 Corinthians in the Chester Beatty Biblical Papyri (see Vol. V, p. 116), the oldest extant manuscript of the epistle, written about the 3d century A.D. The title was not a part of the original document.

2. Authorship. Except for some ultraradical critics who go so far as to question whether Paul ever existed, the Pauline authorship of the epistle has been generally accepted. In fact it, along with 2 Corinthians, Romans, and Galatians, is believed to be the best attested of all of Paul's letters. The name of the author appears at both the beginning and the end of this epistle (1 Cor. 1:1, 2; 16:21). The letter was dictated to an amanuensis, or secretary, with the exception of the salutation at the close of the book,

¹Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment*. Commentary Reference Series (1 Co 1:1). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.

which Paul states he wrote with his “own hand” (ch. 16:21). The exact reason for his use of secretaries is not known, but it appears to have been customary with him (see Rom. 16:22; Col. 4:18; 2 Thess. 3:17). One suggestion is that the apostle had poor eyesight (see on Gal. 6:11).

3. Historical Setting. First Corinthians was written from Ephesus (1 Cor. 16:8). This city was the scene of Paul’s labors for “three years” (Acts 20:31) and the chief center of his activities during his Third Missionary Journey (Acts 19; 20:1). He was about to depart for Greece and Macedonia when the letter was written, but hoped to remain at Ephesus “until Pentecost” (1 Cor. 16:5–8). However, circumstances hastened his departure (Acts 19:21 to 20:3). These observations enable us to date the letter in the spring of A.D. 57 (see p. 103).

The church at Corinth was established during Paul’s Second Missionary Journey. The apostle had spent at least 18 months in that center. His work had been arduous but successful, and a thriving church was established (Acts 18:1–11).

The ancient city of Corinth was situated on the isthmus connecting the Peloponnesus with the mainland of Greece. It was at the southern end of the isthmus, on a low plateau at the northern foot of the mountain known as Acro-Corinthus, on the summit of which stood a citadel and a temple. The city was thus strategically placed, with the overland traffic between the Peloponnesus and Attica passing through the town. Its convenient location between the Saronic Gulf on the east and the Gulf of Corinth on the west of the isthmus made it a market for much of the commerce that flowed from Asia to Europe, and vice versa. Some Phoenicians settled in the city and carried on their trade of making purple dye from the *Murex trunculus* of the neighboring seas. They also introduced other arts, and set up the impure worship of the Phoenician deities.

An important mercantile city, and situated at the passage of the seas, Corinth was cursed with licentiousness to such an extent that the very name of the city became a byword for sensuality. The expression “to Corinthianize” signified luxurious profligacy.

An understanding of the religion of Corinth serves to highlight the wonderful grace of God in overcoming the forces of evil and in planting a church of regenerated saints in this notorious city. By its wealth, luxury, trade, and mixed population, Corinth well merited the title given to it by Barnes, “the Paris of antiquity”. The principal deity was Aphrodite, the goddess of love in its lowest form, licentious passion, and it is not hard to imagine the effect of this deification of sensuality. The temple of Apollo was built on the north slope of the Acro-Corinthus. According to legal requirement 1,000 beautiful young women officiated as courtesans, or public prostitutes, before the altar of the goddess of love. They were supported chiefly by foreigners, and from the proceeds of their vice the city derived a steady income.

The task confronting the messenger of the gospel in the ancient city of Corinth is well set forth in these words: “If the Gospel could triumph in Corinth, it can win under any circumstances” (W. D. Chamberlain).

During Paul’s absence since the founding of the church some three years before (see p. 100), numerous problems had arisen that demanded the apostle’s attention. We learn of these from the epistle itself. First of all, factions had disrupted the church. Because of his eloquence and learning, Apollos was exalted above Paul by many in the church (see 1 Cor. 1:12; 3:4; cf. Acts 18:24 to 19:1). Others boasted that they were followers of neither Paul nor Apollos, but of Peter, one of the original apostles (1 Cor. 1:12). Still others

disclaimed adherence to any human leader and professed to be followers of Christ (ch. 1:12).

Furthermore, living as did the members of the Corinthian church in the midst of the profligate people of Corinth, many who had renounced their wicked ways slipped back into their old habits of life (ch. 5). Further, disrepute had come upon the church by Christians settling their quarrels in the secular courts. The Lord's Supper had been made an occasion for feasting (ch. 11:17–34). Questions had also arisen regarding marriage and related social problems (ch. 7), the eating of foods sacrificed to idols (ch. 8), the proper conduct of women in public worship (ch. 11:2–16). There was misunderstanding also regarding the proper function of spiritual gifts (chs. 12–14). Some were skeptical regarding the fact and manner of the resurrection (ch. 15).

Paul received information regarding the state of the Corinthian church from Apollos, who, when factions arose in the church, had left the scene (see AA 280). Apollos was with Paul at Ephesus. Paul urged him to return to Corinth, but without success (see on 1 Cor. 1:12). Other information came from “them which are of the house of Chloe” (ch. 1:11) and from what was probably a delegation, consisting of Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus (ch. 16:17). The situation was such as to cause Paul serious apprehension. He had already written a letter to the church (see on ch. 5:9), and there is the possibility that he had briefly visited Corinth during his stay at Ephesus (see on 2 Cor. 13:1). He had also sent Timothy (1 Cor. 4:17; cf. ch. 16:10) and Titus to Corinth (see on 2 Cor. 2:13). In addition, he composed the letter now known as 1 Corinthians, in which he dealt with the various problems that had arisen.

4. Theme. The main burden of this epistle is twofold: first, reproof for the backsliding, which had resulted in the introduction into the church of practices that corrupted the teachings of the gospel; and second, instruction, or explanation, regarding the points of belief and practice concerning which the believers had sought for clarification. Paul did not condone or show indulgence to sin. He was impartial in his condemnation, and did not seek to flatter any or to cloak transgression in any way. He firmly and severely denounced departures from the path of rectitude. Along with the exposure of the disorders, and rebuke for the growing irregularities in the church, there is seen the compassionate pity and tender mercy that is always found in the heart of true co-laborers with Christ, a love that ever seeks to lift up the fallen, restore the wandering one, and bind up the wounded soul. Paul knew that love, not force and harshness, is the converting, heart-conquering power, therefore his spiritual surgery upon the church at Corinth was followed by the soothing balm of gentle love. This is particularly seen in the masterly exposition of Christian love found in ch. 13. From the standpoint of instruction the epistle deals with several practical matters, such as marriage, the use of food offered to idols, behavior in church services, the Lord's Supper, and the proper exercise of spiritual gifts.

The book has been described as “one of the richest, most instructive, most powerful” of all Paul's letters (AA 301).

5. Outline.

- I. Introduction, 1:1–9.
- A. Opening salutations, 1:1–3.
 - 1. The writer and his associates identified, 1:1.
 - 2. Destination of the epistle, 1:2.

3. Opening blessing, 1:3.
- B. Commendation for spiritual growth, 1:4–9.
- II. Rebuke of Irregularities, 1:10 to 6:20.
 - A. Factions in the church, 1:10 to 4:21.
 1. The factious spirit rebuked, 1:10–13.
 2. Paul’s defense of his ministry and of the gospel, 1:14 to 2:16.
 3. The inconsistency of a party spirit, 3:1–23.
 4. Proper attitude to spiritual leaders defined, 4:1–21.
 - B. The case of incest, 5:1–13.
 - C. Litigation in secular courts decried, 6:1–20.
- III. Replies to Questions Raised by Corinthian Believers, 7:1 to 11:1.
 - A. Instruction concerning marriage, 7:1–40.
 1. Reciprocal recognition of marital rights enjoined, 7:1–6.
 2. An unmarried state recommended under certain circumstances, 7:7–11.
 3. The problem of mixed marriages, 7:12–16.
 4. Acceptance of Christ not to change social status, 7:17–24.
 5. Instruction concerning virgins, 7:25–40.
 - B. Instruction concerning meats sacrificed to idols, 8:1 to 11:1.
 1. Abstention advised for sake of weak brother, 8:1–13.
 2. Paul’s use of Christian liberty illustrated, 9:1–27.
 3. Warning against idolatry, 10:1–22.
 4. Proper use of Christian liberty, 10:23 to 11:1.
- IV. Proper Conduct in Christian Worship, 11:2 to 14:40.
 - A. Women and their veiling, 11:2–16.
 - B. Proper observance of the Lord’s Supper, 11:17–34.
 - C. The place and function of spiritual gifts, 12:1 to 14:40.
 1. Source and diversity of gifts, 12:1–31.
 2. Love the outstanding gift, 13:1–13.
 3. Discussion of gifts of tongues and prophecy, 14:1–40.
- V. The Doctrine of the Resurrection, 15:1–58.
 - A. The certainty of the resurrection, 15:1–34.
 - B. The literal nature of the resurrection, 15:35–50.
 - C. The hope of the resurrection realized at second advent, 15:51–58.
- VI. Conclusion, 16:1–24.
 - A. Instruction concerning collection for the poor, 16:1–4.
 - B. Disclosure of plans for visit to Corinth, 16:5–9.
 - C. Request for acceptance of Timothy, 16:10, 11.
 - D. Apollos’ decision to remain in Ephesus, 16:12.
 - E. Concluding exhortations, 16:13–18.
 - F. Concluding greetings, 16:19–24.

CHAPTER 1

After his salutation and thanksgiving, 10 he exhorteth them to unity, and 12 reproveth their dissensions. 18 God destroyeth the wisdom of the wise, 21 by the foolishness of preaching, and 26 calleth not the wise, mighty, and noble, but 27, 28 the foolish, weak, and men of no account.

1. Paul. For the significance of the name see Additional Notes on Acts 7, Note 2.

Apostle. Gr. *apostolos* (see on Acts 1:2). The phrase reads literally, “a called apostle.” Paul’s right to apostleship had been questioned in Corinth. Here, and later in this epistle, he fearlessly affirmed and vigorously defended this right (see 1 Cor. 9).

The will of God. Paul emphasizes the fact that it was God’s will that he should be an apostle. He calls attention to the same fact in his letters to other churches (see Rom. 1:1; 2 Cor. 1:1; Gal. 1:1; Eph. 1:1; Col. 1:1; 1 Tim. 1:1; 2 Tim. 1:1). He knew that he was not appointed to the ministry by man, but by God (see Gal. 1:1). Every true minister of the gospel of Jesus Christ should have the same conviction regarding his call, and, like Paul, believe that a woe rests upon him if he undertakes any other task (see 1 Cor. 9:16).

Sosthenes. Of uncertain identification. It is possible that he is identical with the ruler of the Corinthian synagogue mentioned in Acts 18:17. The tradition that makes him one of the 70 disciples (Luke 10:1) is without foundation. Sosthenes may have been Paul’s amanuensis, as Tertius was of the Epistle to the Romans (see on Rom. 16:22). The appearance of Sosthenes’ name in the opening salutation does not mean that he was a co-author of the epistle. It was Paul’s custom thus to mention the names of his associates.

Brother. A common designation for Christians in that period (see Rom. 16:23; etc.). The name “Christian” was not yet common (see on Acts 11:26)

2. Church. Gr. *ekklēsia* (see on Matt. 18:17).

Corinth. For Paul’s labors in Corinth and the establishment of the church there see p. 100; Acts 18:1–18.

Sanctified. Gr. *hagiazō*, “to dedicate,” “to make holy” (see on John 17:17). Later in the verse those who are sanctified are designated “saints” (*hagioi*), literally, “holy ones” (see on Rom. 1:7). *Hagiazō* and *hagioi* are built on the same root. The connection is not so clearly seen in the English, although “sanctify” and “saint” are both built on the Latin root *sanctus*, “holy.”

In Christ Jesus. Those only are accounted holy who have sought and found refuge in Jesus and who are covered by the righteousness of the Saviour.

Called to be saints. Literally, “called saints,” that is, saints who are called. See above under “sanctified.”

In every place. These words may be connected with the phrase “called to be saints,” so that the emphasis of the passage is on the fact that the Corinthian believers formed part of the large brotherhood of believers. Paul is reminding the Corinthians that they are not the sole possessors of the privileges of the gospel.

It is possible also that Paul was using a phrase common in salutations of the time. Two synagogue inscriptions have been discovered containing the greeting, “May there be peace in this place and in all the places of Israel” (see Hans Lietzmann, *Handbuch zum Neuen Testament*, on 1 Cor. 1:2). Not only was the epistle for them, but it is full of instruction for all, and has been preserved in the sacred canon for our instruction and edification (see 2 Tim. 3:16).

Call upon the name. See on Acts 2:21.

Both their’s and our’s. This phrase may refer either to “place” or to “Lord.” If it refers to “place,” it adds little to the thought already expressed. If it refers to “Lord,” it is a further emphasis on the fact that the same Lord is worshiped by Christians of all

communities (see above under “in every place”), with possible reference to the party spirit in Corinth (vs. 11–31).

3. Grace. Gr. *charis*, a word occurring about 150 times in the NT, rendered “grace” 130 times. In the remaining instances it is translated “favor,” “joy,” “thanks,” “thanks,” “thankworthy,” “pleasure,” “liberality,” “benefit,” “acceptable,” and “gracious.” All of these words combined fall short of conveying to the mind the glory, wonder, joy, gladness, and gratitude that are awakened in the mind of him who catches a glimpse of the revelation of all the matchless attributes of God that are manifested in His gracious dealings with man through Jesus Christ. All of these are summed up by the word *charis*.

The ancient Greeks worshiped beauty. They used *charis* to suggest a feeling of beauty or delight; then this idea was transferred to the object that produced the feeling of beauty. The meaning was extended to include gratefulness, thanks, pleasing gracefulness, and agreeableness. In the concrete sense the word indicated a boon granted or a favor done.

The early Christian church adopted this useful expression and applied the connotation of a kind, affectionate, pleasing nature, a gracious disposition, to the attitude of Christians one to another. More particularly the term was used to express the “relation and conduct of God towards sinful man as revealed in and through Christ, especially as an act of spontaneous favor” (Hermann Cremer, *Biblico-Theological Lexicon* [1886], p. 574). This favor of God to man is not in any way dependent on man’s condition; that is, neither his efforts to acquire grace by works of righteousness nor his failure to do so affects the manifestation of God’s favor toward him; it is there for him to avail himself of, if he will. His degree of sinfulness does not have any bearing on God’s willingness to be gracious to him through Jesus. See on Rom. 1:7.

Peace. Gr. *eirēnē*, the word from which the name Irene is derived. As used in the NT, *eirēnē* signifies that complete absence of everything that disturbs or interrupts the fullest working of the Holy Spirit in the life of the individual, by which the soul is brought into perfect harmony with its Creator. J. H. Thayer defines the word thus: “The tranquil state of a soul assured of its salvation through Christ, and so fearing nothing from God and content with its earthly lot, of whatsoever sort that is.” See on Rom. 1:7.

4. I. The singular is evidence that Sosthenes was not a co-author of the epistle (see on v. 1).

Thank my God. Before dealing with the irregularities that had developed in the church, Paul expressed commendation for what the Corinthian believers had attained in spiritual experience. Commendation for faithfulness and obedience precedes rebuke or warning. This is well exemplified in the messages to the seven churches (Rev. 2:2–4, 13, 14, 19, 20). God encourages the church by making mention of the things that are good, and so prepares the way for necessary warnings and rebukes, which, if heeded, as in the case of the church at Corinth, will result in spiritual growth and blessing.

Grace. Gr. *charis* (see on v. 3). Here the gifts of grace, the *charismata* (ch. 12:4) are highlighted (see ch. 1:5–7).

5. In every thing. God had greatly blessed the Corinthian believers. He had rescued them from the grossly corrupt environment in which they lived, raised them from the depths of vice and sin that do not bear description, and unstintingly conferred upon them spiritual gifts so that they came “behind in no gift” (v. 7). Thus abundant provision, far

beyond actual needs, had been made, so that the church had no excuse for backsliding and apostasy. Compare 2 Cor. 9:11.

Utterance. Gr. *logos*, generally meaning “word,” but designating also the expression of that word. Here it probably denotes the ability to express oneself freely and clearly concerning all true knowledge. The gift is probably the same as that designated “the word of wisdom” (*logos sophias*) in ch. 12:8.

Knowledge. Gr. *gnōsis*, from which the words “gnostic,” “agnostic,” etc., are derived. For a discussion of this gift see on ch. 12:8. Knowledge is an essential foundation for Christian faith. The basic facts concerning the existence of God and the plan of salvation must be understood by those who desire to become Christians. It was necessary that there be those in the church who could impart such knowledge. Paul prided himself in the possession of the gift (2 Cor. 11:6). By some in Corinth the gift was perverted (1 Cor. 8).

6. Even as. The force of these words appears to be that the knowledge of the plan of salvation through Jesus Christ was made plain and established by the mighty working of the Holy Spirit in the church at Corinth, and that power was still working in the church, supplying proof of the favor of God and the truth of the gospel in the same measure as when the message of deliverance was first preached in that city.

Of Christ. Or, “concerning Christ.” The result of the abundant outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the Corinthian believers was the establishment of their faith in the gospel, their deep-rooted conviction and acceptance of the truth of the demonstration of God’s love in the sacrifice of Jesus. Not only was the apostles’ testimony concerning Christ believed and accepted, but through the accompanying power of the Spirit of God the church received the gifts of the Holy Spirit (see v. 7). These gifts are enumerated in 1 Cor. 12:1, 4–10, 28; Eph. 4:8, 11–13. The purpose of the gifts of the Spirit is declared to be the development of the church until it reaches unity and perfection in Jesus (Eph. 4:12–15).

Confirmed. Or, “established.” The impartation of the gifts of the Holy Spirit to the early church, including that at Corinth, reveals God’s intention to provide His people with abundant means to stand firm and to bear witness concerning the faith to the unbelieving world.

7. In no gift. “The manifestation of the Spirit” was “given to every man to profit withal” (ch. 12:7). Every believer received some gift. The gifts were especially abundant in the Corinthian church.

Waiting. Gr. *apekdechomai*, “to await eagerly.”

Coming. Gr. *apokalupsis*, literally, “uncovering,” “revealing,” “laying bare that which has been hidden.” This is the word that is used to describe the coming of Jesus in 2 Thess. 1:7; 1 Peter 1:7, 13; 4:13. Jesus, who has been hidden from mortal sight, will suddenly be revealed so that every eye will see Him (Rev. 1:7). A more common word to describe the coming is *parousia* (see on Matt. 24:3). The simple word for “coming,” *erchomai*, is also frequently used. The coming of Jesus was the joyous expectation and hope of the church in the 1st century, and it is still the “blessed hope” of every true disciple of Jesus (Titus 2:13). The Corinthian believers, established in the faith of Jesus by the various gifts of the Spirit, were eagerly looking for the manifestation of the Saviour at His second coming. Thus it is now. Gifts in the church today confirm the

testimony of Jesus. The remnant church is characterized as having “the testimony of Jesus Christ” (Rev. 12:17), which is defined in ch. 19:10 as the “spirit of prophecy.”

8. Who. That is, the Lord Jesus Christ (v. 7).

Confirm. Or, “establish.”

Unto the end. Compare Phil 1:10; 1 Thess. 5:23; Jude 24. This statement must not be construed as teaching that it is impossible to fall away from grace. That defection for the believer is possible is clearly revealed in other scriptures (see, for example, Heb. 6:4–6). Believers will be confirmed unto the end only if they endure unto the end (Matt. 24:13; see on John 10:28).

Blameless. The believers are assured that Christ will make them firm in the midst of trials and temptations and keep them in the path of holiness throughout life, so that at Christ’s coming they will be found unreprouvable. It is not a promise that they would be perfect in the sense of never having made a mistake, for “all have sinned” (Rom. 3:23). Jesus will enable them to live victoriously if they submit to Him constantly, demonstrating that they seek to please Him. At His coming they will be found unreprouvable because they are covered with His righteousness. “Blameless” must be distinguished from “perfect.” “Blameless” describes those who cannot be charged with any crime, who stand before the Judge unaccused, and against whom there is no ground for accusation.

9. God is faithful. Compare 1 Cor. 10:13; 1 Thess. 5:24; 2 Thess. 3:3; etc. The absolute dependability of God is the basis for Paul’s statement that the believers will be preserved unreprouvable until the last. God’s promises, like His character, are unchangeable. This is a source of constant comfort to the Christian living in the increasingly unstable world of today.

Called. See on Rom. 8:30; cf. chs. 9:24; 11:29. All men are called by God to enter into fellowship, or communion, with Jesus. They are called by the influences that God brings to bear upon them to lead them to renounce sin and accept salvation through Christ.

Fellowship. Gr. *koinōnia* (see on Acts 2:42; Rom. 15:26).

10. Beseech. Gr. *parakaleō*, literally, “to call to the side of,” hence, “to admonish,” “to exhort,” “to comfort” (see on John 14:16). Here the former meanings “to admonish,” “to exhort” apply. This verse marks the transition from thanksgiving and commendation to rebuke. After a brief introduction Paul launches directly into a discussion of the various problems that require his attention. See on Matt. 5:4.

Brethren. A common form of address in Paul’s epistles. Here the endearing term is probably used designedly to soften the severity of the rebuke Paul is about to deliver. The term also implies unity, a quality lacking among the Corinthian believers.

By the name. Literally, “through the name.” Jesus is the medium of the appeal (cf. Rom. 12:1; 1 Thess. 4:2). The appeal to *one* name may be a further implied rebuke (see above under “brethren”) of the party spirit existing among the Corinthian believers.

Speak the same thing. This phrase translates an idiom found in classical Greek meaning “to be agreed.” Its use here has been pointed out as illustrating Paul’s acquaintance with classical Greek writings (see on Acts 17:28).

Divisions. Gr. *schismata*, from the word *schizō*, “to rend,” “to split.” In Matt. 27:51 *schizō* describes the rending of the veil of the Temple. *Schisma* is used in Matt. 9:16 of a

rent in a garment. Paul uses the word in a moral sense for “dissension,” “division,” with special reference to the party spirit in Corinth. Our English word “schism” is derived from *schisma*.

Be perfectly joined together. Gr. *katartizō*, “to mend [as a torn fishing net]” (Matt. 4:21); ethically, “to perfect,” “to complete.” This earnest plea for unity in the church strikes a note that is heard repeatedly in the preaching of Jesus and the apostles (see John 17:21–23; Rom. 12:16; 15:5, 6; 2 Cor. 13:11; Phil. 2:2; 1 Peter 3:8).

Mind ... judgment. Gr. *nous* ... *gnōmē*. These words may be distinguished as follows: *Nous* denotes the state or frame of mind, *gnōmē* the opinion, judgment, or sentiment, that results from a certain frame of mind.

11. Declared unto me. Members of Chloe’s household brought Paul information concerning the condition of the church in Corinth.

Brethren. See on v. 10.

Them which are. The words “which are of the house” are supplied. It cannot be determined whether these were members of Chloe’s immediate family, relatives, servants, or slaves.

Chloe. The name means “verdant,” or, perhaps, “blonde.” The name was common among freedmen, a fact that suggests that Chloe may have been a freedwoman. The family doubtless lived in Corinth, whence they brought Paul firsthand information concerning the dissensions in the Corinthian church (see AA 300). Some have sought to identify the delegation mentioned in ch. 16:17 with the members here referred to. There is no evidence to support this view.

Contentions. Gr. *erides* (singular, *eris*), “strifes,” “wranglings,” “contentions.” *Eris* appears in the catalog of sins listed in Rom. 1:29–31, also among the works of the flesh (Gal. 5:20).

12. Every one of you. The party spirit had seemingly affected all. The various members of the church registered their support for one party or another.

Of Paul. Paul mentions first the party that claimed to be followers of him. He shows favor to no party, least of all to his “own.” All come in for condemnation. Party spirit of any form is wrong. Comparison of one spiritual leader with another is contrary to the spirit of Christ.

Apollos. An Alexandrian Jew, a follower of the teachings of John the Baptist, a man “eloquent” and “mighty in the scriptures” (Acts 18:24, 25). He received his instruction in the tenets of the Christian faith at Ephesus from Aquila and Priscilla. From there he journeyed to Achaia, and for a time labored in the church at Corinth (Acts 18:27, 28; cf. 1 Cor. 3:5–7). His learning and eloquence led certain in the church to exalt him above Paul. When Paul first preached the gospel in that metropolis his labors had been adapted to meet the minds of those ignorant of spiritual truth (1 Cor. 2:1–4; 3:1, 2). Privileged to build upon this foundation, Apollos had been able to give instruction beyond the rudiments of the faith (ch. 3:6–11). His personality, manner of labor, and the type of message he bore appealed to a certain class, who began to show preference for him. Others refused to swerve from a loyalty they felt toward Paul, the one who had first brought the gospel to them. As far as Paul and Apollos were concerned there was perfect

harmony between them (see vs. 5–10). When dissensions arose, Apollos left Corinth and returned to Ephesus. Paul urged him to return, but Apollos resolutely refused.

Cephas. That is, Peter. “Cephas” is a transliteration of the Aramaic *Kepha*, meaning “stone” (see John 1:42). “Peter” is the transliteration of the Gr. *Petros*, also meaning “stone” (see on Matt. 16:18). Doubtless those belonging to this party believed that there was special merit in claiming attachment to one of the original Twelve. Peter had been intimately associated with Jesus and had been one of the leaders of the twelve apostles. This fact, they believed, ranked him above either Paul or Apollos. There are those who believe that the presence of this party indicates that Peter at some time must have visited Corinth. However, such a conclusion is not required, nor is there evidence elsewhere that such a visit ever occurred.

Of Christ. Those belonging to this party refused to follow any human leader. They were independent in their attitudes and claimed to be taught directly by Christ (see AA 278, 279).

13. Is Christ divided? The absurdity of the question is immediately apparent.

Was Paul crucified? The form of the question in the Greek implies a negative answer. The force of the question is revealed in the translation: “Paul was not crucified for you, was he?” Paul tactfully uses himself as an example rather than Apollos or Peter.

In the name of Paul. Compare the formula in Matt. 28:19; Acts 8:16.

14. God. Textual evidence may be cited (cf. p. 10) for the omission of this word, resulting in the translation “I give thanks.”

Baptized none. Evidently Paul had his converts baptized by his associates, perhaps to forestall any special sanctity being placed upon the rite when performed by certain individuals. It is not the rite itself, nor the fact that it is performed by a certain individual, that makes the ordinance meaningful, but the experience of the participant. Compare the practice of Jesus who “himself baptized not, but his disciples” (John 4:2).

Crispus. The former chief ruler of the synagogue at Corinth (Acts 18:8) Crispus is a Roman name.

Gaius. Evidently Paul’s host and the host of the whole church at Corinth, who is mentioned in Rom. 16:23. It is doubtful that he is the same as the Gaius to whom the Third Epistle of John is addressed (3 John 1). Gaius is a Roman name.

15. I had baptized. Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 10) the reading “ye were baptized.” The meaning is not essentially altered. Apparently the belief was current in Corinth that a special relationship existed between the one baptizing and the one baptized. Even those claiming to belong to his party could not boast baptism at the hands of their leader. Paul was happy for the stand he had taken with regard to permitting others to do most of his baptizing.

16. I baptized also. This verse indicates clearly that this epistle was written by dictation. Otherwise Paul would not have added the “household of Stephanas” as an afterthought, but would have editorially inserted it with Crispus and Gaius (see v. 14).

Stephanas. The house of Stephanas was the first fruits of Paul in Achaia (ch. 16:15). Stephanas was with Paul when 1 Corinthians was written (ch. 16:17).

17. Not to baptize. Paul was anxious that Christ alone should be exalted, and that men and women should be won to Him; therefore he made it clear that it was not his main business to baptize, but rather to persuade men to surrender to the Saviour. He did not intend to imply that he would not baptize anyone, but he wished it to be known that he

was not seeking to glorify himself by a large number of baptisms. His argument, as recorded in vs. 13–17, shows his great desire that the human agent in the work of salvation should be lost to view and the gaze of repentant sinners concentrated on Jesus alone. Paul was aware of the danger that those who were baptized by the apostles might claim superiority over other converts who were not so favored, and thus introduce a party strife into the church. He declared that his work was to make known to all people the glad news of salvation and to call them to repentance and faith in Jesus. This should ever be the grand objective of all ministers of the gospel.

Wisdom of words. The Greeks prized highly their subtle and learned methods of disputation and the polished eloquence of their orators. Paul did not seek to emulate their involved, philosophical style of rhetoric. The success of the gospel does not depend on these things, and the apostle had not exhibited them in his preaching. His teaching and manner of speech were not such as called forth the praise of the sophisticated Greeks. They did not regard his preaching as wise. He was anxious that the glory of the cross of Christ should not be obscured by human philosophy and elegant oratory, and thus the glory be given to man instead of to God. The preaching of the cross depends for its success, not upon the power of human reasoning and the charm of polished argumentation, but upon the impact of its simple truth attended by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Made of none effect. Literally, “emptied,” that is, emptied of its essential content.

18. Preaching. Gr. *logos*, literally meaning “word.” There is, perhaps, an intended contrast with “wisdom of words” (see on v. 17).

Of the cross. That is, concerning the cross. The “preaching of the cross” is the message of salvation through faith in the crucified Lord. Such a message appeared as the height of foolishness to the philosophy-loving Greek and to the ritualistic-minded Jew.

Them that perish. They are on the way to perdition, because the one thing that has power to save them, namely, the word of the cross, appears like folly to them.

Are saved. Literally, “are being saved.” Paul here describes salvation as a present act. The Scriptures represent salvation as a past, present, and also a future act (see on Rom. 8:24).

Power. Gr. *dunamis* (see on Luke 1:35). To those who, because of their willingness to believe the unadulterated statement of the gospel, “are being saved,” the word of the cross is the “power of God.” This power is demonstrated by the transformation of character that accompanies the sinner’s acceptance of the provisions of grace. The gospel is much more than a statement of doctrine or an account of what Jesus did for mankind when He died on the cross; it is the application of the mighty power of God to the heart and life of the repentant, believing sinner, making of him a new creation (see Rom. 1:16; cf. 2 Cor. 5:17).

19. It is written. The quotation is from Isa. 29:14, agreeing more nearly with the LXX than with the Hebrew. Paul is giving scriptural evidence for his observation in 1 Cor. 1:18. All the efforts of men to find a way of salvation through human philosophy and godless thinking will be rejected by the Lord and brought to nought.

20. Where is the wise? This verse is a rather free quotation combining the ideas from Isa. 19:12; 33:18; cf. ch. 44:25. By the “wise” Paul probably had in mind particularly the Greek, with his love for worldly philosophy; by the “scribe,” the Jew with his emphasis on the authority of the law; and by the “disputer,” both Greek and Jew, who were fond of

philosophical argumentation. This verse points out the complete unreliability of all forms of human thinking and reasoning as a means of achieving salvation.

21. In the wisdom of God. Although placed where they were surrounded by many evidences of the wisdom of God in the mighty works of creation, the wonders of the natural world, the glories of the stellar heavens, and the wonderful working of providence on their behalf, men did not learn to know God. In His love and pity for lost mankind, God proclaimed the glorious news of salvation through faith in Christ. This news, which to worldly-wise individuals was mere foolishness, became, for those who accept it, God's chosen agency for redemption.

World by wisdom. Despite its boasted wisdom and achievements the world had not arrived at a knowledge of the true God. The Greeks were distinguished for their philosophy, but all their search for strange and new things (see Acts 17:21) had not led them to a knowledge of the "God that made the world and all things therein" (v. 24). The Jews, too, boasted of their superior wisdom, but they were sadly ignorant of the essential knowledge of salvation.

Knew not God. That is, did not attain to a knowledge of Him. Paul is here speaking of the wisdom of salvation such as is revealed in the gospel.

Preaching. Gr. *kērugma*, "announcement," "proclamation," with emphasis on the message preached, though not excluding the idea of the heralding itself, to be distinguished from *kēruxis*, "the act of preaching." The "foolishness of preachings" is the announcement of the gospel of salvation through faith in the crucified Christ, which to the Greek and the unbelieving Jew seemed like sheer folly.

22. The Jews. Literally, "Jews." The absence of the article in the Greek calls attention to the characteristics of the noun so appearing rather than to identity. Similarly "the Greeks" is, literally, "Greeks."

A sign. Textual evidence attests (cf. p. 10) the reading "signs." For the demand of the Jews for a sign see on Matt. 12:38; cf. Talmud *Sanhedrin* 98a, Soncino ed. p. 665. By Jews and Greeks Paul designated the two prominent classes of his day. The Jews looked for outward physical demonstrations in wonders, miracles, and marvelous supernatural happenings.

Greeks. For centuries this race had been distinguished by their intellectual achievements and by their dependence on reason. They believed that the human intellect was able to penetrate into and to comprehend everything.

23. Christ crucified. See on ch. 2:2.

Stumblingblock. Gr. *skandalon*, "the trigger of a trap," or "the baited stick on a trap," placed in such a way that when an animal stepped on it the trap was sprung and the animal was caught. Metaphorically, *skandalon* means that which causes sin, error, or offense. To the nation of Israel according to the flesh, who clung to the expectation of a Messiah who would rule as an earthly king and make them the supreme kingdom in the world, the message of the crucified Saviour gave offense. The gospel was directly contrary to their conception of the Messiah, and was therefore rejected by them, to their ruin. Compare Gal. 5:11, where *skandalon* is translated "offence." The attitude of the Jews toward the idea that someone crucified might be the Messiah is illustrated in Justin Martyr's *Dialogue With Trypho*, in which Trypho says, "But this so-called Christ of

yours was dishonourable and inglorious, so much so that the last curse contained in the law of God fell on him, for he was crucified” (32; *ANF*, Vol. 1, p. 210).

Unto the Greeks. To those who relied on philosophy, logic, science, and intellectual discoveries, the idea that one who was put to death by the most humiliating form of punishment used by the Romans—crucifixion—could save them, was sheer nonsense (see AA 245). The difficulty the philosophical mind experiences in accepting a crucified man as the Son of God is reflected in the following passage from Justin Martyr: “For with what reason should we believe of a crucified man that He is the first-born of the unbegotten God, and Himself will pass judgment on the whole human race, unless we had found testimonies concerning Him published before He came and was born as man, and unless we saw that things had happened accordingly” (*The First Apology* 53; *ANF*, vol. 1, p. 180). In ch. 13 the apologist declares, “For they proclaim our madness to consist in this, that we give to a crucified man a place second to the unchangeable and eternal God” (*ibid.*, p. 167).

24. Called. That is, effectively called. For such, the invitation has not only been given; it has also been accepted. For this meaning of “called” see on Rom. 8:28, 30.

Both Jews and Greeks. See on Rom. 1:16. All true Christians, irrespective of nationality or cultural opportunities and privileges, recognize Jesus as the One through whom the power of God is exercised for their salvation. They see that God’s plan for man’s redemption is wise, that it removes all barriers and brings men of all types and training together into one great community of loving fellowship.

25. Foolishness of God. The means God has devised for the salvation of man appears to be folly and weakness to those who are blinded by human philosophy. The language is rhetorical. There is, in reality, no foolishness or weakness with God, but His dealings with the human race seem to the unregenerate heart of man to be utterly foolish. Actually the plans of God for the reformation and restoration of man are much better adapted to man’s need than all the schemes and contrivances of the cleverest and most highly trained thinker this world can produce.

Weakness of God. That is, that which appears weak to men (see above under “foolishness of God”).

26. Ye see. Or, “behold.”

Calling. See on v. 24.

Not many wise. “The gospel has ever achieved its greatest success among the humbler classes” (AA 461). In the establishment of His church, God did not take counsel of the wisdom, wealth, or power of this world. He seeks to win all classes, but the so-called wisdom of this world leads men often to exalt themselves rather than to humble themselves before God. Hence it is seen that the proportion of worldly rich and of those regarded as leaders of popular thought, who accept the simple gospel of Jesus Christ, is small.

Are called. These words have been supplied, and if retained, should be understood in the sense of “effectively called” (see on v. 24). It may be better to understand the passage: “There are not many wise among you.”

27. The foolish things. The mind that is filled with the learning of this world is often confused by the plain, simple declaration of gospel truth by one who has been under the instruction of the Spirit of God but who may not have received much education in the schools of the world. The Jews were astonished by the wisdom of Jesus, and asked, “How

knoweth this man letters, having never learned?" (John 7:15). They could not understand how anyone who did not attend the schools of the rabbis could appreciate spiritual truth. The same situation still obtains today. The value attached to a man's teaching is often calculated simply by the amount of formal education he has had. True education is that which makes the Word of God central and all-important. One who has obtained such an education will be humble, meek, and wholly surrendered to the leading of the Holy Spirit. Compare Matt. 11:25.

Weak things. That is, those things the world considers as weak.

28. Base. Gr. *agenēs*, literally, "of no family," hence used to describe a man of no name or reputation. Here *agenēs* signifies those who are held of no account among men. Paul is emphasizing the thought that God is in no way indebted to human skill or learning for the accomplishment of His purpose in the redemption of men. Humble, fully surrendered instruments are used by the Lord to show how vain and impotent are those who trust in worldly rank, power, and learning.

Things which are not. That is, things that the world considers as nonexistent or of no account.

29. No flesh. That is, no human being (cf. Mark 13:20; Luke 3:6; etc.). Paul now summarizes the argument of vs. 18–28 by stating that no class of men, whether rich or poor, high or low, learned or ignorant, has any ground for boasting before God.

Should glory. The tense of the Greek indicates that not even one boast can be made.

30. Of him. That is, of God. Our life, our being, is of God (Acts 17:25, 28).

In Christ Jesus. It is union with Christ that makes Christians strong and wise. They do not attain high position, wealth, honor, or power of themselves. God, through Jesus Christ, supplies all things. Even though men do not recognize the fact, nevertheless all the good things of life that they possess are made available by the agency of Christ. Everything necessary to rescue men from the degradation into which they have sunk as the result of sin is found in Jesus, who is the "fulness of the Godhead bodily" (Col. 2:9; cf. COL 115). Through Jesus we become wise, righteous, holy, and redeemed.

Wisdom. See on Rom. 11:33.

Righteousness. By faith the righteousness of Christ is imputed and imparted to the repentant believer (see on Rom. 1:17; 4:3).

Sanctification. Gr. *hagiasmos* (see on Rom. 6:19).

Redemption. Gr. *apolutrōsis* (see on Rom. 3:24).

31. Glory in the Lord. An abridged quotation from Jer. 9:23, 24. There is no cause for exaltation or for boasting in any human achievement. The only thing in which man can find any justifiable ground for glorying is the fact that he knows the Lord Jesus Christ as his personal Saviour. The wonder of the love and wisdom of God, revealed in Christ, is an inexhaustible source of praise and rejoicing, before which all human wisdom and achievements fade into total insignificance.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

- 1 AA 127
- 1–31FE 352; TM 481
- 2–7SL 85
- 4 DA 510
- 4–7EW 143

5–8AA 301
 7 FE 218; 4T 447, 608
 10 SL 85; 1T 210, 324, 332; 3T 446; 4T 19; 5T 236; 6T 65; 8T 167, 251
 10, 11 AA 302; 5T 65
 11 AA 300; 6T 684
 12 6T 401
 12, 13 AA 280
 17 AA 127
 17–21FE 196
 18 AA 240; 1T 525; 4T 585
 18, 19 AA 241; CT 447; FE 415; MYP 191; 2T 495
 18–248T 167
 18–29CW 118
 19 LS 329
 19–21CT 417; FE 359
 19–24FE 332
 21 AA 242; FE 361; TM 152; 5T 300, 737; 6T 32; 8T 257
 23 AA 245; ML 219
 23–256T 142
 23–31TM 481
 24 AA 594; CSW 124; FE 262, 408; 8T 194
 25 CT 447; FE 415; GC 232; MYP 191
 26 AA 461; Ev 565
 26–28COL 79
 26–29AA 127; 2T 495
 26–31FE 352, 473
 27 7T 267
 27, 28 AA 241; TM 172
 27–294T 378
 30 AA 530; CM 49; COL 43, 115; CT 371, 435; TM 80; 6T 147, 160, 257; 7T 272
 30, 31 CT 447; CW 120; FE 415; MYP 191

CHAPTER 2

He declareth that his preaching, 1 though it bring not excellency of speech, or of 4 human wisdom: yet consisteth in the 4, 5 power of God: and so far excelleth 6 the wisdom of this world, and 9 human sense, as that 14 the natural man cannot understand it.

1. When I came. Paul is speaking of his arrival in Corinth and of his early ministry there (see Acts 18:1–18). About three years had since passed.

Excellency of speech. Paul did not try to win men by brilliant rhetoric or superior powers of oratory. Neither did he rely on “wisdom,” that is, philosophy, in order to prove the truth of the gospel (see on ch. 1:17–19). The Corinthians were unskilled in divine matters. It was necessary for Paul to instruct the new converts in the very rudiments of the gospel. For this type of instruction brilliant oratory was unsuited.

Testimony. Textual evidence may also be cited (cf. p. 10) for the reading “mystery.” For a definition of the word “mystery” see on Rom. 11:25; cf. Eph. 6:19; Col. 2:2; Rev. 10:7. The gospel contains the account of what God has done to rescue man from sin and

restore him to harmony with Himself. It records the evidence that God has given, in the life of Christ, of His great love for man.

2. Determined. Gr. *krinō*, denotes a conscious act of the will. Here it means “to resolve,” “to make a definite decision.” Paul’s decision as to his new method of labor was not an idea of the moment, but a carefully thought-out plan formed before going to Corinth. At Athens the apostle had used scholarly argumentation and philosophy to combat the heathen idolatry of the Greeks. His efforts had met with little success. As he reviewed his experience at Athens, he decided to adopt a different method of preaching in Corinth. He planned to avoid learned discussions and detailed arguments and to present the simple story of Jesus and His atoning death (see AA 244).

Save Jesus Christ. The phrase reads literally, “except Jesus Christ and this one [as] crucified.” Paul preached Christ crucified in spite of the fact that the idea of a crucified Saviour was an offense to both Jews and Greeks (see on ch. 1:23).

3. I was. Literally, “I became,” meaning, “I came [to you].”

Much trembling. Paul was conscious of his shortcomings and infirmities (see 2 Cor. 10:1, 10; 11:30; 12:5, 9, 10). He was anxious about the success of his mission to Corinth, for he knew that he had many enemies in the city (see Acts 18:6). However, God had assured him that his work would be successful and that he had nothing to fear (see Acts 18:9, 10). The apostle was concerned, also, lest his work should be marked by merely human characteristics. The true minister of God will ever be conscious of his own limitations and weaknesses. Such an attitude leads him to place greater reliance upon God for strength and wisdom to do His work. “Our greatest strength is realized when we feel and acknowledge our weakness” (ST 70). “Cool complacency is not the mood of the finest preaching” (Robertson).

4. Preaching. Gr. *kērugma* (see on ch. 1:21).

With enticing words. Literally, “with persuasive words.” In neither private discussions nor public preaching did Paul rely on the persuasive power found in human reasoning. He did not seek to charm and captivate his hearers with the style of subtle philosophy that so appealed to the Greeks.

Man’s. Important textual evidence (cf. p. 10) may be cited for the omission of this word. The meaning of the passage is not essentially altered by the omission.

Demonstration. Gr. *apodeixis*, “a showing forth,” “certain proof,” “evidence,” “demonstration.” The proof of the divine origin of the message that Paul preached was not to be found in clever argumentation, but in the evidence, or “showing forth,” of the Holy Spirit. Paul’s work at Corinth had been accompanied, as it was elsewhere, by miracles (2 Cor. 12:12 cf. Acts 14:3). The gifts of the Holy Spirit had been imparted to the church in rich measure (see 1 Cor. 1:5–7; ch. 14). The presence of the gifts of the Spirit in the church was a demonstration of the truth of the gospel preached by Paul. But the greatest miracle was the conversion of many Corinthians from heathenism to Christ (see Acts 18:8). The thief became honest; the lazy, industrious; the licentious, pure; the drunkard, sober; the cruel, kind and gentle; and the miserable, happy. Strife and discord gave place to peace and harmony. Such evidences of the power of the gospel of Jesus Christ could be observed by all, and could not be denied. The gospel has continued to furnish this kind of proof of its divine origin through the centuries. Every converted

sinner provides such a demonstration; and every instance of the gospel's producing peace, joy, hope, and love, shows that God is the source of the message.

5. *Your faith.* Paul desired that the Corinthians should trust in the mighty power of God to change the lives of men. He did not wish to lead them to place confidence in any form of human power. In his efforts he had avoided the use of philosophical wisdom to convince his hearers of the truth of the gospel. He sought to hide himself in Jesus in order that the faith of the believers might rest entirely in the Saviour. It is not by the will or efforts of man that anyone is led to surrender himself to the Lord, but by the convicting power of the Holy Spirit.

6. *Howbeit.* Or, "but." This introduces the second section of the argument in ch. 2, in which Paul shows that it is only the mind surrendered to the Holy Spirit that can understand and appreciate the gospel. Although Paul had not approached the Corinthians with the excellency of human wisdom, nevertheless he had brought to them a treasure of true wisdom.

Perfect. Gr. *teleioi*, "full grown," "mature" (see on Matt. 5:48). Paul is here describing mature Christians. See Eph. 4:13, 14, where he contrasts a "perfect" (*teleios*) man with "children." Compare Phil. 3:15, where Paul speaks of himself and others as "perfect" (*teleioi*). In Heb. 5:14 *teleioi* is rendered "of full age." The Christian should grow in knowledge of the truth and should not require continual feeding with spiritual "milk" (Heb. 5:12, 13). Jesus Himself hinted that the representation of doctrine should be adapted to the various stages of Christian growth (see John 16:12). Paul reminded the Corinthian believers that he was addressing his instruction to those who had already learned the rudiments of Christianity and should now be able to appreciate the more profound truths of the gospel (see Cor. 3:1–3).

Wisdom of this world. See on ch. 1:21, 22.

Princes of this world. These are identified in v. 8 as the ones who crucified Jesus.

Come to nought. The Greek indicates that the coming to nought is in the process of being accomplished. Worldly-wise great men, with all their learning and achievement, are constantly being proved unreliable in the realm of spiritual truth. In the light of the wisdom taught by Christ, they are found to be ignorant and powerless.

7. *Wisdom of God.* Here referring particularly to the wisdom of God as revealed in the plan of salvation (see below under "mystery").

Mystery. Gr. *mustērion* (see on Rom. 11:25). The plan of salvation, formulated before the creation of the world (see DA 22; pp. 63) and announced and put into effect by the Father and the Son when Adam sinned (see PP 64–66), was a great mystery to the universe. The angels could not fully comprehend it (see 1 Peter 1:12; GC 415). The prophets, who wrote concerning it, understood only in part the messages they bore to the church concerning salvation through Christ (1 Peter 1:10, 11). The natural man completely fails to appreciate the "wisdom" of God because it is so directly contrary to man's accepted philosophy of life. Even the consecrated believer cannot fathom the depth of meaning in the plan of salvation (see Rom. 11:33–36).

Glory. See on Rom. 3:23.

8. *None ... knew.* Because of their false interpretation of the OT prophecies concerning the Messiah, the Jews did not recognize Jesus of Nazareth as the promised Deliverer. Their traditional belief that the Messiah would come as an earthly ruler to

make Israel the dominant nation in the world led them to reject the Saviour. Similarly, erroneous beliefs and traditions today blind the eyes of men to the truth of the second advent of Christ. Furthermore, the false teachings of popular theology concerning the nature of God have caused many to reject Christianity altogether and to become agnostics or even infidels (see 5T 710).

Lord of glory. Compare Acts 7:2; Eph. 1:17; James 2:1. Christ is here described as the “Lord of glory” in sharp contrast with the ignominy of the cross. Compare on John 1:14. For a definition of glory see on Rom. 3:23.

9. But. Gr. *alla*, a strong adversative. Although unconverted men do not understand the “wisdom of God in a mystery” (v. 7), God has made a wonderful revelation of His wisdom to those who love Him. The riches of God’s grace are not discerned by the unconverted, but the Christian sees the beautiful things of this world as an expression of God’s love to man and an earnest of the future perfect state.

Written. The quotation is from Isa. 64:4.

Eye hath not seen. The verse reads literally, “The things which eye saw not and ear heard not, and upon the heart of man came not, which God prepared for those who love him.” The physical facts of existence are discovered by the senses, which are used to acquire knowledge of things around us. That neither eye nor ear can understand the things of God proves that other faculties than the physical senses are required to understand spiritual truths (v. 10).

Heart. Gr. *kardia*, a word referring to the center of human faculties (see on Rom. 1:21). The grand realities of the kingdoms of grace and glory cannot be fully understood either through the avenue of the senses or by the intellect. But through the knowledge God imparts to those who are willing to be instructed by Him, Christians may gain an ever-increasing understanding. Of himself, man is unable to perceive or appreciate the blessings of the gospel. The experience of the unconverted contains nothing that can be compared with the joyful peace that comes to the heart of the sinner who surrenders to Christ and receives the sweet assurance of God’s forgiveness.

Things. Whatever God has planned for His people is included in this comprehensive word. In its primary application the statement deals with all that is provided through the gospel for the welfare and happiness of God’s people while here on earth. This relates to forgiveness of sins, justification and sanctification, the joy and peace that the grace of God imparts to the believer, and his ultimate deliverance from this evil world. By extension the statement also comprehends the inexpressible wonder and beauty and joy of God’s kingdom of glory, the eternal home of the saved. All such knowledge is far beyond anything that men may know apart from the gospel of Christ. See on Isa. 64:4.

Prepared. Compare Matt. 20:23; 25:34.

10. God hath revealed. God has planned a continuing revelation of truth to His people (see 5T 703). Understanding of the things of God is given to those who love God, who appreciate what He is and all that He has done for them, who are ready and eager to accept whatever provision He has made for them and who search for truth as for hidden treasure.

By his Spirit. The third member of the Godhead is the one through whom an understanding of truth is imparted to mankind (see on John 14:16). A continuous acquisition of knowledge is possible only for those who willingly submit to the guidance and illumination of the Holy Spirit (see Rom. 8:5, 14, 16).

Searcheth. Being a member of the Godhead, the Holy Spirit knows all things. He is not in any sense ignorant of anything. He searches, not in order to discover something He did not previously know, but to bring to light the hidden counsels of God. It is the work of the Holy Spirit to bring the things of God to the remembrance of His people and to guide them in their investigation of truth (John 16:13, 14).

This passage shows that the Holy Spirit is not an impersonal force. Searching is an attribute of personality involving both thought and action. The Spirit knows and understands all the profound plans and counsels of God. Here is clear evidence of omniscience, and hence of divinity.

11. Spirit of man. A man's private thoughts, desires, intentions, and plans are fully known and understood only by himself. No fellow mortal can know them unless the man himself chooses to reveal them. If he does decide to reveal his ideas, thoughts and plans to others, they can know and understand only as much as is opened up to them.

No man. Literally, "no one," thus including beings such as angels.

12. Spirit of the world. This expression is probably closely parallel to "wisdom of this world" (v. 6). The world is here represented as possessing and imparting a spirit which in its essential nature is evil. The "spirit of the world" is opposed to the Spirit of God. Its possessors find no pleasure in heavenly things, but concentrate on the temporary things of this life.

Spirit which is of God. Rather, "Spirit which is from God." The reference is to the Holy Spirit.

That we might know. God's purpose in giving us the Spirit is that we may understand the things provided by the grace of God. The Spirit of God not only reveals to man the blessings of the gospel but works out in him the will of God. The result of this reception of the Holy Spirit will be seen in the life that is lived in harmony with the will of God. In such a life the fruits of the Spirit are seen (see Gal. 5:22, 23). Those who turn away from the "spirit of the world" are emptied of self, and re-created and refined by the Holy Spirit, who leads them to fix their affections on the kingdom of God. They are fitted to become citizens of heaven.

13. Man's wisdom teacheth. The phrase reads literally, "not in taught words of human wisdom." The words, the subtle reasoning, of Greek philosophy could not rightly present the truths of God.

Holy Ghost teacheth. Literally, "in taught [words] of the Holy Spirit." Paul was the recipient of instruction communicated by the living Spirit of God. He recognized that he was under the leadership of the Holy Spirit and that his thoughts were prompted by the Spirit (see AA 251; EGW Supplementary Material on Peter 1:21). Seeing that heavenly wisdom is so different from all earthly knowledge, it must be expressed in a way and in words that differ from ordinary earthly usage. The one in whom the Spirit of God dwells, and through whom He works, lives in a different sphere from the worldly-minded person, and will of necessity speak in a different way. A mathematician expresses a mathematical truth in the technical language of mathematics; a musician discusses a musical theme in the vocabulary of music. Similarly spiritual truths are expressed in spiritual words and forms of statement.

Comparing. Gr. *sugkrinō*. This word occurs in the NT only here and in 2 Cor. 10:12, where it is also translated "to compare." In the LXX *sugkrinō* has the meaning "to interpret" (see Gen. 40:8, 16, 22; 41:12, 13, 15; Dan. 5:12, 16). In classical usage the

word means “to join together fitly,” “to combine.” Its meaning in the papyri does not seem to bear upon the present passage. There it means “to decide [especially in judicial matters].”

The interpretation of the present passage is dependent first upon the meaning given to *sugkrinō* and second upon the gender assigned to the word translated “with spiritual” (*pneumatikois*). In the form in which it appears *pneumatikois* may be either masculine or neuter. If it is masculine, it refers to spiritual persons, or perhaps to spiritual words; if it is neuter, it refers to spiritual things. The ambiguity of the term *pneumatikois*, together with the various meanings that may be assigned to *sugkrinō*, makes possible several translations: (1) “combining spiritual truths with spiritual words,” (2) “interpreting spiritual things by spiritual words,” (3) “interpreting spiritual things to spiritual men,” (4) “comparing spiritual things with spiritual,” that is, the spiritual revelations earlier given, (5) “clothing spiritual content in Spirit-wrought forms.” There is no way to determine which of these interpretations was uppermost in Paul’s mind. All suit the context and all convey significant spiritual truth.

14. The natural man. Literally, “a natural man,” that is, a man who is not spiritual-minded; one unregenerate, whose interests are confined to the things of this life. Such a man depends on human wisdom for the solution of all his problems. He lives to please himself and to gratify the desires of the unconverted heart, hence is incapable of understanding and appreciating the things of God. To him the plan of salvation, the wonderful revelation of God’s love, is folly. He cannot distinguish between worldly philosophy and spiritual truth because the wisdom of God is understood only by those who permit themselves to be taught by the Holy Spirit.

Spiritually. Man cannot arrive at spiritual truth unaided (see on vs. 9, 10).

Discerned. Gr. *anakrinō*, “to examine,” “to investigate,” here to arrive at truth after examination and judging. Compare the use of *anakrinō* in Luke 23:14; Acts 4:9; 1 Cor. 2:15; 10:25; etc.

15. He that is spiritual. That is, the regenerate man, one who is enlightened by the Holy Spirit, in contrast with the one not thus enlightened.

Judgeth. Gr. *anakrinō*, the word that is translated “discerned” in v. 14 (see comment there). *Anakrinō* conveys the idea that the spiritual man examines, sifts, and carefully judges matters that come to his attention. Guided by the Divine Spirit, he consequently draws proper conclusions.

Judged of no man. Men may attempt to do so, but no worldly-minded or “natural” (v. 14) man can understand the principles, feelings, opinions, joys, and hopes of the spiritual man, because the unregenerate heart is not able to appreciate the things that come from the Spirit of God.

16. Mind of the Lord. The first part of this verse is a quotation from Isa. 40:13. No unregenerate man can understand the divine operations; hence he is not in a position to teach the spiritual man, who is under the tuition of the Holy Spirit. Those who are spiritual have the Holy Spirit within them, who teaches them the deep things of God.

Mind of Christ. We are, by the Spirit, united to Christ, for the Holy Spirit’s presence is the same as the presence of Jesus (see John 14:16–19); therefore we “have the mind of

Christ” (see Phil. 2:5). By the Holy Spirit Jesus dwells in the believer and works in and through him (Gal. 2:20; Eph. 3:17; Phil. 2:13).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

- 1 AA 270
1–5MH 214
1–16FE 352; TM 481
2 AA 128, 244; CM 43; DA 510; 2T 213, 634; 3T 27; 6T 66
3 AA 250
3–8TM 482
4 AA 127, 244, 270, 402; Ev 180, 186; FE 242; 2T 344; 5T 157, 723; 6T 61
5 AA 127, 270; COL 79
6–13AA 250
8 5T 710
9 AH 545; CG 54; COL 163; CS 84; CT 55, 188, 513; Ed 301; FE 49; GC 675; MB 61; ML 175, 354; PP 602; SC 87; SR 430; 4T 446; 5T 730
9, 10 DA 412
10 AA 271; COL 113, 149; CW 82; GW 287; SC 108; TM 111; 5T 701; 8T 157, 301
10, 11 SC 109; TM 482; 5T 703
10–13AA 402
11 COL 413; Ed 134; Ev 617
12 GW 287
12–15FE 361
13 CT 461, 462; Ed 190; FE 127, 187; MYP 262; SC 90; TM 482; 3T 427; 6T 88
13, 14 COL 113; CT 437
14 AA 271; COL 106; CSW 65; DA 171, 213, 392, 509; FE 183, 188; GC 524; GW 310; MH 460; SC 19; TM 248; 2T 130, 138, 265, 344; 4T 506, 524, 585; 5T 134, 241, 300, 431
14–16TM 483
16 AH 125; DA 675; LS 323; 3T 210; 4T 354; 5T 336

CHAPTER 3

2 *Milk is fit for children.* 3 *Strife and division, arguments of a fleshly mind.* 7 *He that planteth, and he that watereth, is nothing.* 9 *The ministers are God’s fellowworkmen.* 11 *Christ the only foundation.* 16 *Men the temples of God, which* 17 *must be kept holy.* 19 *The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God.*

1. Could not speak. See below under “as unto babes.”

Carnal. Gr. *sarkikos*, “fleshly,” “with the nature and characteristics of flesh.” Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 10) the reading *sarkinos*, “fleshy,” “of flesh,” “rooted in the flesh.” This distinction should probably not be pressed too far. The two words may here and in v. 3 have been used with identical meaning.

As unto babes. In his labors in Corinth, Paul had adapted his methods of labor to local circumstances. He was obliged to present the gospel in a simple way because of the incapacity of the Corinthians to understand the deeper features of Christianity. He had to treat the people of Corinth as spiritual babes and to confine his teaching to the more elementary features of religion. He could not treat them as spiritually mature, qualified to grasp the fuller and deeper truths of the gospel, nor could he consider them to be free

from the feelings and ambitions that control and motivate men of the world. Among them were factions and quarreling, distressing evidences that they were still responding to the promptings of the natural heart.

2. Fed. Gr. *potizō*, “to give to drink.” Compare Heb. 5:12–14; 1 Peter 2:2.

Milk. The natural food of babes. “Milk” represents the elementary principles of the gospel.

Meat. Gr. *brōma*, food in general, here solid food contrasted with milk. “Meat” represents the fuller and deeper truths of the gospel (see Heb. 6:1, 2).

Neither yet now. Not only were they unable to comprehend the higher mysteries of the gospel when Paul first visited Corinth, but even now as he writes this epistle they are not far enough advanced in Christian knowledge to do so.

3. Carnal. Gr. *sarkikos* (see on v. 1). By this term Paul did not necessarily imply that the Corinthians were wholly given over to the flesh, as were the unregenerate, but rather that they were still partly under its influence.

Envy, and strife. Gr. *zēlos kai eris*, “jealousy and contention,” listed among the works of the flesh (translated “emulations” and “variance,” Gal. 5:20). The former gives rise to the latter. The spirit of jealousy and evil imaginings prevented the Holy Spirit from having full access to the hearts of the Corinthians (see AA 271; 5T 241). The desires and feelings that dominate the natural heart must be subdued by the power of Jesus before man is able to understand and appreciate the plan of salvation.

Divisions. Gr. *dichostasiai* (see on Rom. 16:17). Textual evidence may be cited (cf. p. 10) for the omission of this word. *Dichostasiai* are also mentioned in Gal. 5:20 as among the works of the flesh.

4. I am of Paul. See on ch. 1:12.

Carnal. Gr. *sarkikoi*, “fleshly.” Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 10) the reading *anthrōpoi*, “men,” that is, mere men.

5. Who then is Paul? Textual evidence (cf. p. 10) is divided between this and the reading, “What then is Paul?” that is, What is his peculiar position? The same division of evidence applies to “who is Apollos?” Paul is seeking to set before the people the true position of the minister of Christ. He is not called to be the leader of a schismatic party; he is simply a minister (*diakonos*, “servant”; see on Mark 9:35) seeking to lead his fellow men to salvation.

As the Lord gave. Probably to be understood in the light of Rom. 12:3, “according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith” (see comment there). It would thus refer to the Corinthians who believed as a result of the ministry of Paul and Apollos. Or Paul may have been thinking particularly about himself, Apollos, and other ministers of Christ, who, in carrying out their commission, were simply doing what was expected of them (cf. on Luke 17:10).

6. I have planted. Every one of God’s servants has his allotted task to perform. Some ministers do pioneer work, sowing the seed of the Word; others gather in the harvest. Several different instruments may be used to lead a sinner to Christ, as in the work done by a carpenter many different tools may be used to construct an article.

Gave. Literally, “was giving.” The continued blessing of God is being emphasized.

Increase. Men are only the means employed by God in His soul-winning work, and all the credit for the conversion of sinners must be given to Him (see 7T 298). Those who believe through their ministry should center their affections on Jesus and not on those through whom the gospel was imparted to them.

7. Any thing. Here is the answer to the questions raised in v. 5, “Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos?” (see comment there).

But God. He is everything. All success is due to His blessing. Men must not ascribe to themselves the glory for their success.

8. Are one. He who plants and he who waters are not working at cross-purposes. They are united in their aims and objectives. It is ridiculous to set them up as rival leaders.

His own reward. Each one will receive compensation that is fitting for the service he has performed in the cause of God. All the redeemed receive the basic reward of eternal life, but beyond that the blessing bestowed on the redeemed in the kingdom of glory is related to the nature of their service in this life. That there are degrees of reward in the kingdom of glory for services rendered seems to be a reasonable deduction from the parable of the Pounds (Luke 19:16–26; cf. 2T 284, 285; COL 330, 331, 363; DA 314). As stewards of God’s goods, His children are expected to use their abilities faithfully in His service. Money expended in the work of God, and talents used to witness for Him, will result in the saving of men and women eternally (see 9T 58, 59).

9. Labourers together with God. The Greek places the emphasis on “God.” The work is God’s. Men are merely the hands of the heavenly agencies. As workers in association with the great Master Workman, men must be willing to labor in His way even though that may be altogether contrary to their natural ideas (Col. 3:23). They will endeavor to cooperate fully with the Lord in carrying out His instructions. The child of God knows that his Father will never require him to do anything that is not for his best interests. This relationship of joyful cooperation is based on simple trust in the great love of the Omniscient Father. Confidence in the wisdom and love of God results in willing submission to divine guidance. Those who thus submit will be used by God as His collaborators (see 8T 172). A vision of the exalted nature of being co-workers, not with the great men of this world, but with the Creator of this world, the One by whose power the universe is maintained, makes the highest honors and greatest rewards the world can offer seem insignificant. If all would catch this vision of their exalted privilege, and act unitedly for the carrying out of God’s plans, they would move the world (see 9T 221; cf. 2T 443).

Husbandry. Gr. *geōrgion*, “tilled land,” “a cultivated field.” The word does not appear elsewhere in the NT. Paul is continuing the figure begun in v. 7. The church at Corinth is represented as a field that God cultivates in order to produce fruit for His kingdom. God is the Master Husbandman.

Building. Gr. *oikodomē* from *oikos*, “house”, and *demō*, “to build.” Paul introduces a new metaphor. God is the Master Architect of the spiritual building of the church. Compare the use of this metaphor in Rom. 15:20; Eph. 2:20–22.

10. Grace of God. Paul acknowledged that everything he had accomplished in founding the church in Corinth had been by the favor of God. God appointed him to his work as the apostle to the Gentiles (see Acts 9:15, 16; 26:16–18; 2 Cor. 1:1; Gal. 1:1). A special feature of his work was the founding of new churches (see Rom. 15:20).

Wise. Gr. *sophos*, here meaning “skilled.”

Masterbuilder. Gr. *architektōn*, from which our English word “architect” is derived. *Architektōn* comes from the word *archi*, meaning “chief” (compare the term *archaggelos*, “archangel”), and *tektōn*, “a craftsman,” derived from *tiktō*, “to beget,” “to produce.”

Architektōn occurs nowhere else in the NT, but the phrase *sophos architektōn* occurs in the LXX of Isa 3:3, where the KJV reads “cunning artificer.” Paul had proceeded with the work of establishing the church by laying a firm foundation, as would a skillful architect in the erection of a building. On such a foundation other gospel workers could continue the work of building, knowing that the believers were firmly grounded in the fundamental principles of truth.

How he buildeth. Paul’s successors were to be careful how they built upon the foundation the apostle had laid. There is an implied warning also against false teachers. Paul’s work was frequently interfered with by those whose teaching was not based upon the simple truths of the gospel (see Acts 15:1, 2, 24; 2 Cor. 11:26; Gal. 1:8, 9; 2:4, 5). Not only is it essential that new converts be faithfully instructed in the basic doctrines of the church, but also that they be carefully protected against erroneous teachings of misguided fanatics who might arise.

11. Other. Gr. *allos*, “another [of the same kind],” “one more” (see on Gal. 1:6).

There is only one Saviour. Others whom men proclaim as saviors are not “another of the same kind.” They are not saviors at all (see John 14:6; Acts 4:12).

Is laid. Or, “is lying.”

12. If any man build. Paul’s primary reference is to the leaders of the church at Corinth, not all of whom were carrying on their work commendably (see on v. 10).

Gold, silver. The figure of building materials described in this verse may be understood as representing (1) the spiritual instruction of the leaders, or (2) the persons composing the building of God’s spiritual house. These two ideas are closely related and were perhaps both in the mind of Paul when he used this metaphor. Proper spiritual instruction leads to the formation of healthy Christian characters; inferior instruction, to defective characters. For the picture of church members represented as “lively stones” of a “spiritual house” see 1 Peter 2:5.

Precious stones. Durable building materials, such as granite and marble, or perhaps simply ornamental stones. If Paul meant the former, he was emphasizing durability; if the latter, preciousness. These building materials represent either sound instruction or church members of vigorous spiritual life (see above under “gold, silver”).

Wood, hay, stubble. These represent defective instruction or church members of defective experience (see above under “gold, silver”). There are many erroneous beliefs and doctrines that will not endure the searching test of God’s Word and will not contribute to the formation of characters that will endure in the judgment. There is much fanaticism, bigotry, affected humility, exaggerated attention to outward form and ceremony, frothy enthusiasm and excitement in religion, which will stand exposed in the great day of God.

13. Made manifest. The real nature of a man’s work is not always apparent in this life, but it will be revealed in its true light “when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ” (Rom. 2:16). The character of the spiritual instruction imparted will then be

fully revealed in the results the teaching has produced in the lives of those who have received it. Some will be weighed and found wanting. Others will receive the crown of immortality.

The day. That is, the day of final judgment, the day of the Lord, referred to as “that day” in 1 Thess. 5:4.

Revealed by fire. Only fireproof materials are left when a building is burned down. The fire represents times of crisis, including the “hour of temptation,” that will come upon all the world “to try them that dwell upon the earth” (Rev. 3:10). The literal fires of the last day are apparently not referred to here, for the fire represents a testing work and men may be saved who pass through it (see 1 Cor. 3:14, 15). In times of trouble the real nature of the faith of God’s professed children will be made manifest. If they are truly converted and have been thoroughly indoctrinated with the pure gospel of Jesus Christ, the fires of persecution and trial will only cause their faith to grow stronger and their love for the Lord to shine out more brightly. If, on the other hand, they have received faulty instruction, composed of a mixture of human philosophy and worldly compromise, their faith will not stand the test of trouble, and they will fall away from Christ and His church. Only those who have built faithfully on the true foundation, Jesus Christ, and have used durable materials will see their work endure to the end.

14. Work abide. See on v. 13.

Receive a reward. See on v. 8.

15. Shall be burned. He who does not build wisely by following closely the instruction of the Master Builder will see his work destroyed (see Matt. 7:26, 27). He may repent of his poor workmanship and be accepted by God, but the results of his faulty work will not be changed. They will remain, an eternal loss to the unfaithful builder. By his words and deeds a man may misrepresent the teachings of Jesus and thereby sow seeds of doubt, evil surmising, and love of the world. By his influence he may cause many souls to turn away from the pure gospel and accept error. He may later recognize the wrong he has done and repent sincerely. God will forgive him and save him. But because of his faulty building, souls will be outside the kingdom. Thus even though he is saved, others will be eternally lost (see Gal. 6:7; 5T 429).

Himself shall be saved. A superficial reading of vs. 12–15 has led some to the erroneous conclusion that Paul here teaches the individual predestination, irrespective of personal choice. That such is not the case becomes evident upon a careful reading of the context (vs. 3–15). The apostle here discusses his labors as an apostle and those of other “ministers” (v. 5) who had served the church at Corinth. The “reward” here spoken of (v. 8) is a reward for service rendered in the gospel ministry, not for one’s personal life as a Christian. For comment on Bible predestination see on John 3:17–20; Rom. 8:29; Eph. 1:4–6.

By fire. Literally, “through fire,” here apparently a figure representing a narrow escape. The man who builds on the foundation of wood, hay, stubble, may at the last moment of probation repent and be saved, but how tragic his wasted life! The eleventh-hour repentance of the lifelong blunderer may be accepted but what a poor, maimed offering he has to present (see 3T 165)

16. Temple. Gr. *naos*, a word used by the ancient Greeks to describe the innermost cell or shrine in the temple, where the image of the heathen god was placed. In the NT

naos, distinguishes the Temple building from the Temple complex—the Temple and related structures—the *hieron* (cf. on Matt. 4:5).

Paul turns his attention to those who constitute the spiritual building. Collectively they make up the spiritual temple of God in which resides the Spirit of God. Paul is here speaking primarily of the church and is warning his successors at Corinth against bringing injury to the church in any way (1 Cor. 3:17). It is true, of course, that the individual Christian is also the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit, but this thought is given primary emphasis in ch. 6:19, 20 (see comment there).

17. Defile. Gr. *phtheirō*, the word translated “destroy” later in this verse. This word play in the Greek is preserved in the English by translating both occurrences of *phtheirō* by “destroy”: “If any man destroy the temple of God, him shall God destroy.” Paul’s warning is primarily directed toward those who by their schismatic policy were destroying the Corinthian church. In a secondary sense Paul’s warning may be understood as applying to the individual believer who himself is the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit, although this feature is more directly dealt with in ch. 6:19 (see comment there). It is a fearful thing to bring injury to the church of God. Those who by word or example tear down that which God has built up are denounced as worthy of the most severe punishment.

Which temple. The word “temple” has been supplied, and probably correctly so, although grammatically “which” may refer to “holy,” so as to make the clause read, “of which holy character ye are.” The idea would then be that, even as the building in which the presence of God was manifested was holy, so are believers in whom the Holy Spirit dwells.

18. Deceive himself. The Greek implies that deceived persons, such as are here described, were parading their wisdom in the Corinthian church. Paul urged these self-deluded, self-styled “wise” members to practice humility and to cease relying upon their supposed wisdom (cf. Prov. 3:5, 6). Their dependence upon their own learning and knowledge had led to the confusion that existed in the church. Those who have the reputation among men of being wise are in particular danger of self-exaltation, and need to humble themselves before God in grateful acknowledgment that all true wisdom comes from Him.

Seemeth to be wise. Rather, “thinks that he is wise.”

Become a fool. Both in his own eyes and in the eyes of the world. Let him realize that his opinion of himself as a wise man is a deception, and that his so-called wisdom is valueless in relation to salvation. Let him humbly submit himself to the guidance of the Holy Spirit, even though he may be regarded by the world as a fool. If he does this, then he will obtain true wisdom, that which comes from God alone.

19. Wisdom of this world. All the efforts of men to find peace and happiness apart from God are doomed to failure. The study of human philosophy does not lead to God, but to the exaltation of the creature. The vain, self-confident opinions of the Greeks regarding religion are looked upon by God as folly (see ch. 1:19–21). God sees the imperfection of all human wisdom, for He sees everything as it really is. Anything that men seek to add to the simple gospel of Jesus is naturally marked by their own imperfect appreciation of the mind of God. The false teachers who had troubled the church at Corinth doubtless mixed their own speculations with the Scriptures.

It is written. A quotation from Job 5:13 (see comment there).

Their own craftiness. However cunning, clever, or skillful men may consider themselves to be, they cannot improve upon the Word of God. They cannot deceive God, nor can they produce a better plan than the divine plan. God can defeat their purposes and bring their plans to nothing. He does this by permitting them to demonstrate their folly and become entangled or ensnared by it (cf. Job 5:12; Isa. 8:10). The many different theological systems and religious philosophies found in the Christian world today illustrate the force of this statement.

20. Again. A quotation from Ps. 94:11.

They are vain. By contrast the man who gladly recognizes his insufficiency and submits to the guidance of the Holy Spirit has true wisdom (see Ps. 94:12; Prov. 3:5–8).

21. Therefore. Paul now proceeds to state the conclusion drawn from the preceding arguments. Because true wisdom does not come from any man, whoever he may be, but from God, there is no reason why any believer should exalt the human agent whom God uses to impart truth.

22. All are your's. The line of argument used here is based on the truth that the believer, by virtue of creation as well as of salvation, belongs, through Christ, to God (see Ps. 100:2–4; Acts 20:28; Rom. 14:8; Eph. 1:14; 1 Peter 2:9). God is owner of all things whether animate or inanimate, and the things that He has made are intended to be for the blessing of His redeemed people (see MB 110, 111). All apostles, prophets, ministers, or any other type of messenger whom He uses, serves the entire church, not merely one section of it. Therefore it is wrong to claim allegiance to any particular leader or agent such as Paul or Apollos. They are only the instruments whom God uses to accomplish His purposes on earth. The attention of believers must be fixed upon God and upon Jesus, from whom, as God, all wisdom comes (see Col. 2:2, 3). In the beginning of this world's history God placed man in a perfect earth, where everything was planned for his welfare, happiness, and enjoyment. But sin entered, bringing with it death and suffering. God overruled the efforts of Satan to destroy the human race. All has been marred by sin, but the things of earth are provided by the Father for the benefit of His children (cf. Rom. 8:28).

23. Ye are Christ's. This is the grand climax to which Paul has been directing his argument. If all the believers belong to Christ, there must be only one great party in the church, not many groups. It is the statement of the grand unity that our Saviour desires to see in His church and which will ultimately exist (see John 17:9–11, 21, 23; Eph. 4:13).

Christ is God's. Compare chs. 11:3; 15:28. See on John 1:1; see Additional Note on John 1.

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1, 2 AA 271; Ev 369

1–23TM 483

3 3T 343; 5T 241

3–99T 197

4–7AA 274

6 AA 272; ChS 260; Ev 150; GW 252; TM 54, 404; 1T 75, 380; 4T 529; 5T 381; 7T 298

8, 9AA 275; 1T 432

9 AA 56; AH 212, 259; CD 303; CE 70; CH 372; ChS 9, 21, 84, 179, 234, 253; CM 154; COL 82, 146, 402; CS 23, 52, 300; CSW 106, 120, 176; CT 22, 210, 409, 451, 452; Ed

138; Ev 95, 106, 159, 291, 685; FE 161, 194, 214, 218, 262, 325, 397, 463, 527; GW 73; ML 304, 305; MM 9, 125, 192, 217, 297; MYP 47, 211; PP 595; Te 65; TM 122, 145, 187, 209, 254, 312, 347, 379, 406, 493, 495; 1T 381; 4T 536; 5T 515, 726, 731; 6T 49, 51, 187, 232, 335, 374, 420, 423; 7T 39, 67, 94, 184, 191, 236, 272; 8T 170, 172, 197, 240; 9T 86, 103, 109, 152, 220, 221; WM 120, 223, 244, 309

9, 10 AA 303

9–138T 173

10, 11 GC 56

10–13AA 596; EW 27

11 AA 475; CT 62; DA 413; Ed 30; GW 307; MB 149; 2T 145; 5T 270; 8T 297

11–13PK 409; 3T 444; 4T 318; WM 155

11–15AA 599; CT 222; 1T 125

12 AH 417; CW 17, 47; Ev 213; FE 168, 169, 446, 452; ML 89; MM 319; MYP 44, 318; PK 36; 5T 32

12, 13 Ev 256; 4T 656; 5T 352; 8T 206

13 1T 98, 383; 5T 466

14 5T 467; 9T 285

15 CT 392; Ev 213; FE 397; MYP 419; 8T 102

16 DA 100; FE 466; MH 271; ML 88, 137

16, 17 CG 448; CH 41, 622; DA 161; Ed 36; MH 281, 288; Te 142; 2T 353; 3T 372

17 CD 131, 414; Ed 201; FE 427; MYP 242; PP 362, 462; Te 62, 64, 65, 79; 4T 33, 570

18 FE 449

18, 19 FE 130

19 COL 258; CW 102; FE 406, 414; ML 111; 2T 129; 4T 560; 6T 318; 7T 257

21 MB 110

21–23AA 280

22, 23DA 288

23 AA 306; MB 110

2

CHAPTER 4

1 *In what account the ministers ought to be had. 7 We have nothing which we have not received. 9 The apostles spectacles to the world, angels, and men, 13 the filth and offscouring of the world: 15 yet our fathers in Christ, 16 whom we ought to follow.*

1. Account of us. Paul counsels the Corinthians to regard him and his fellow workers as ministers and stewards, not of men, but of God. Being called by God to their work in the ministry of the gospel, they were not to be considered as leaders of various factions in the church or as heads of conflicting parties. Christ has given to His workers the responsibility of dispensing His word to the world (see Matt. 28:19, 20). They are not permitted to preach and teach the opinions and beliefs of men, but are charged to present to men the pure message of salvation, unadulterated by worldly philosophy (see 1 Tim. 6:20, 21; 2 Tim. 4:1–3).

²Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment*. Commentary Reference Series (1 Co 1:1). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.

Ministries. Gr. *hupēretai*, “servants,” “attendants,” “ministers.” The word was originally used for the rowers on the war galleys, and distinguished these rowers from the soldiers who stood on the deck and fought. Later it came to be used with reference to any subordinate who engaged in hard labor and, in military terminology, of orderlies who served their commander in chief. This use of *hupēretai* as the military servants whose duty it was to attend the highest officers in the army may be reflected in Paul’s use of it in this verse. Those who are entrusted with the work of the gospel ministry are, in a special sense, the attendants of the great heavenly Commander in Chief, Jesus. They are the official, human representatives of Christ, the royal officers of His spiritual kingdom (see John 18:36, where this word is translated “servants”).

Stewards. Gr. *oikonomoi*, “managers,” “stewards.” The Greeks used this word in connection with the management of property, either of a household or of an estate, and applied it to the slaves or freedmen who were entrusted with the care and management of the house and land belonging to their master. The steward not only presided over the affairs of the household, but also made provision for it. This was an office of considerable responsibility. The application of this word to Christ’s ministers is singularly appropriate. The gospel minister is charged with caring for the church of God on earth and providing that which is necessary for its well-being (see John 21:15–17; 1 Peter 5:1–3).

In stewardship, the matter of supreme importance is faithfulness. Man has absolute ownership of nothing at all in this world, not even his physical and mental strength, for “all the abilities which men possess belong to God” (5T 277). He is a created being, and as such he belongs to his Creator. He is also a redeemed being, purchased by the blood of Christ (see Acts 20:28); therefore in a double sense man is not his own. The earth and everything in it belong to God; He is the supreme owner. He has entrusted the care of His property to man, who thus becomes His steward, the one charged with the responsibility of using his Master’s goods in such a manner that benefit will accrue to God. Recognition of this relationship between man and his Creator should produce a determination to exercise great care in the use of everything entrusted to him during the period of his sojourn on this earth. The true believer in Christ will seek constantly to glorify God in his management of the things placed in his care, whether they be physical, mental, or spiritual. He will recognize that he is not free to use his goods or his talents for the satisfaction of the natural desires and ambitions of his own heart. He is under obligation at all times to place God’s interest first in all the activities of life. This truth is illustrated by the parable of the Talents (see on Matt. 25:14–30; COL 328, 329).

Mysteries. Gr. *mustēria* (see on Rom. 11:25; 1 Cor. 2:7). The plans of God for the restoration of man to harmony with Himself were formerly but dimly understood, but now they are revealed through Jesus Christ (see Eph. 3:9–11; Col. 1:25–27; 1 Tim. 3:16). Christ’s workers are commissioned to make plain the sublime truths of the gospel to all men (Matt. 28:19, 20; Mark 16:15). They are so to labor that the wants of every soul who is seeking for righteousness are met. This responsibility of dispensing the good news of salvation rests upon every believer, for all are stewards, entrusted with the bread of life for a hungry and starving world (see 9T 246; Ed 139).

2. Faithful. Gr. *pistos*, “trusty,” “dependable,” “that can be relied upon.” The quality of dependability is one of the most valuable assets a man can have. It is highly esteemed by God. Failure in this respect means failure to qualify for eternal life (see Luke 16:10–12; COL 3:56). Only those will receive an inheritance in the new earth who can be relied upon by God under all circumstances. We prove ourselves faithful stewards by continually seeking to glorify God in all the details of our lives.

3. Very small thing. Paul is referring to the criticism that had been directed against him and against his methods of labor by certain self-styled “wise” (ch. 1:20, 27) men in the Corinthian church. In his capacity as a steward of the “mysteries of God” (ch. 4:1) Paul was not responsible to men, but to God, in the conduct of his stewardship. He was not troubled by the opinions of men in this respect so long as he had the commendation of God. He did not despise the good counsel and judgment of his fellow men (see 1 Thess. 4:12; 1 Tim. 3:7), but his principal aim and objective in life was to serve and please the One who had called him to be an apostle (see Phil. 3:13, 14; 2 Tim. 2:4).

Man’s judgment. Literally, “human day [of judgment].” Paul is contrasting human judgment with God’s judgment in the day of the Lord (see ch. 3:13).

Mine own self. Paul does not even consider his own opinion of himself valuable. Only God can correctly appraise men. If the apostle realized that he could not correctly appraise himself, it was not to be expected that he would set a high value on the opinions of his critics no matter what their qualifications for judging might be. No man is qualified to evaluate properly the motives and attitudes of his fellow men, because he cannot read their hearts and know their thoughts. Therefore none are to criticize others (see on Rom. 2:1–3; see MB 124, 125).

4. By myself. That is, against myself. The apostle was not aware of any error in his manner of labor or of any defect in his manner of life (see Acts 20:18–21, 26; 2 Cor. 7:2). Every minister of the gospel ought to be able to make such an appeal to the integrity of his public life. Paul knew the danger of indulging in a self-confident spirit and thus being led to believe that one is right when actually he is in error. It was not with any pharisaical boast that Paul made the statement that he was ignorant of any fault in his service. This is clear from the next statement, “yet am I not hereby justified.” He knew that he was but a fallible human being, likely to pass faulty judgment, so he pointed out that he was not in any sense vindicated thereby or set forth as right. He understood that the fact that he could not find any indication of unfaithfulness in his stewardship of the “mysteries of God” was not sufficient to declare him free from blame. He knew that God might see imperfections where he could not, that his own opinion of himself might easily be distorted by partiality.

The Lord. God alone is able to make a thorough investigation of the apostle’s life and stewardship. He only can read the heart and understand the motives that prompt every word and act (see 1 Chron. 28:9; 1 John 3:20). Paul was not disturbed by the judgment passed upon him by his critics, nor did he rely upon his own estimation of himself, but he willingly submitted his case to the Lord, knowing that God’s judgment would be infallibly correct. This declaration of reliance on God’s judgment could have been regarded by the Corinthians as wise counsel to them. They were too prone to accept their own judgment of their fellow men, not realizing that “the Lord seeth not as man seeth” (1 Sam. 16:7).

5. Judge nothing. Paul makes it plain that it is wrong to entertain a harsh or unkind opinion regarding our fellow men. Being imperfect ourselves, we are not qualified to form correct estimates of the characters of others (see Matt. 7:1–3; Rom. 2:1–3; James 4:11, 12; MB 124; DA 805; AA 276; 5T 347; 9T 185, 186). It is particularly dangerous to indulge in destructive criticism of God’s workers (see 1 Tim. 5:1, 17, 19; cf. Num. 16:3, 13, 14, 29–35; 5T 497; TM 410). The Christian cannot avoid noticing defects of conduct in his fellow men, but he must refrain from judging motives and from passing judgment upon his fellow men in the sphere of their spiritual relationship to God.

The time. Gr. *kairos*, “the proper season,” “opportune time” (see on Mark 1:15). Paul refers to the time appointed by God for judgment. It is possible for men to hide their true characters from their fellow men, but at God’s duly considered season, when Christ comes again, nothing will remain covered, not even the most carefully guarded secret thoughts and purposes that are harbored in the minds of men (see Ps. 44:21; Eccl. 12:14; 4T 63; 5T 147).

Praise. Literally, “the praise,” that is, the reward. At that time when the plans and purposes of men are revealed, every worker for God will receive his just measure of approval. We can safely leave the apportioning of praise to the righteous Judge, who never errs. Men should beware of giving praise to God’s servants (see 4T 400; cf. COL 161, 162). God’s ministers are merely His instruments and it is God who uses them to accomplish His purposes; therefore it is He alone who should be praised and exalted.

6. Transferred. The things he has written concerning religious teachers (see ch. 3:5, 6, 21, 22), Paul applies to himself and to Apollos, who was closely connected with him. The principles that he had set out are generally applicable, but not universally true in practice. But of the ideals set forth Paul and Apollos were examples. This was not true of the leaders of the factious Corinthian parties.

To think. Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 10) the omission of this phrase. If it is omitted, the counsel is more general: the Corinthians are to conduct themselves according to the rules laid down in the Word of God.

That which is written. That is, the general instructions found in Scripture—here meaning the OT. In all matters pertaining to religion the Scriptures are to be final authority.

Be puffed up. Gr. *phusioō*, from *phusa*, “a pair of bellows,” hence, “to be self-exalted,” “to be self-conceited.” Paul condemns the pride of those who exalted their party above others, or their party leader over other party leaders. Believers should consider themselves to be on a level with one another, and no Christian should regard any other as inferior to him or as deserving of contempt.

7. Maketh thee to differ. That is, sees such a pre-eminence in you.

Receive. No man has any cause for boasting, because he owes everything to God. The talents he possesses are from God, who gives power and wisdom for their development. Therefore no teacher in the church has any ground for pride or for assuming pre-eminence. His gifts and the power by which they were developed came from God.

Glory. Gr. *kauchaomai*, meaning also “to boast,” and thus repeatedly translated (Rom. 2:17, 23; 2 Cor. 7:14; etc.). Since the entrance of sin into the world, it has been natural for men to indulge in pride, particularly in connection with their own accomplishments. In this tendency they are following the example of Satan, who fell

from his high estate in heaven because of his insufferable pride (see Isa. 14:12–14; Eze. 28:15, 17). The Christian must guard against this fault at all times. Especially subtle is the temptation to yield to spiritual pride. God alone is to be glorified and exalted (see Jer. 9:23, 24).

8. Now. Rather, “already.”

Full. Gr. *korennumi*, “to satiate oneself.” The word occurs elsewhere in the NT only in Acts 27:38. The statement is ironic, as are the following two statements. Paul’s aim is forcefully to awaken the Corinthian Christians to a realization of their true condition, and to lead them to a state of mind in which they would be ready to accept counsel and help from experienced leaders, such as himself, in a spirit of true humility. For other examples of Biblical irony see 1 Kings 18:27; Job 12:2. The Corinthian believers were altogether satisfied with their own knowledge and did not feel their need of anything more. They did not realize that they could be helped by Paul to any greater extent than they had already been helped by other teachers at Corinth.

Rich. Paul continues his irony, but in a different form. He says that the Corinthians esteemed themselves to be rich in spiritual things. Compare Hosea 12:8; Rev. 3:17.

Have reigned as kings. Rather, “have begun to reign as kings.” The climax of this ironical passage is reached in this statement. Paul compares his self-conceited readers with those who have reached the greatest elevation, where there is nothing more exalted to be reached or desired.

Without us. That is, without Paul and his associates. The Corinthian believers felt well qualified to conduct their lives successfully and to care for the interests of the church. They had disregarded Paul’s authority and supposed that they could get along as well without him as with him.

I would to God. Gr. *ophelon*, “would that,” used to express a fruitless wish. The words “to God” do not appear in the Greek. The remainder of this verse may be understood in two ways: (1) as an expression of a fervent wish that the kingdom of glory might be established, when all God’s redeemed will reign as kings and priests with Jesus (Rev. 20:4, 6); (2) as a continuation of the irony of the earlier part of the verse. Paul is saying, “Would that your imagined reigning as kings were an actual fact and that we might join with you in this felicity.”

9. The apostles last. The figure is that of the amphitheater, in which participants who were brought out at the conclusion of the program were doomed to fight with each other until they were killed, or to be torn to pieces by wild animals. There was no hope of escape for them. These inhuman games were carried on in many places in the Roman Empire, and an allusion to them would be readily understood. Paul frequently drew illustrations from the games (see 1 Cor. 9:24–26; 15:32; 1 Tim. 6:12; 2 Tim. 4:7, 8). The apostles are presented as though they were reserved to provide the greatest entertainment for a cruel audience.

Appointed to death. Compare Rom. 8:36; 1 Cor. 15:30, 31.

Spectacle. Gr. *theatron*, “a show,” “a spectacle.” Our English word “theater” is derived from *theatron*. The word refers either to the place of amusement or to the thing exhibited.

God’s servants who witness faithfully for Him become centers of interest for inhabitants of this little world and of heaven (see Heb. 10:32, 33; 12:1; 4T 34–36). This

whole world of ours is a stage on which the conflict between sin and righteousness, truth and error, is being carried on before an intensely interested audience composed of the inhabitants of the universe (see 5T 526). It is the duty of every believer to let the light of truth be seen by all with whom he comes in contact. If Christians realized that the eyes of the universe are focused upon them, there would be a revival of the faithful witnessing that characterized the lives of the apostles (see 7T 296).

10. Fools. “The preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness” (ch. 1:18). Because the apostles persisted in presenting the good news of salvation through simple faith in Jesus Christ, they were regarded as stupid and dull of understanding. Nevertheless they did not dare to mingle worldly wisdom with the simplicity of the gospel. They were content to depend on the power of God rather than on the wisdom of this world (see Rom. 1:16, 17). Faithful Christians must expect to be misunderstood by the world, but that should not disturb them; they know that God’s way is contrary to man’s way, and must therefore seem strange to the carnal heart (see Isa. 55:8, 9; Rom. 8:7, 8; James 4:4; 1 John 2:15–17).

Ye are wise. Paul is speaking ironically as in v. 8 (see comment there).

Ye are strong. What a contrast between the self-distrustful, humble, consecrated apostle, who had come to the church at Corinth “in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling” (ch. 2:3), and the self-confident, arrogant Corinthian believers who felt that they were strong and wise in Christ

Ye are honourable. Because of their assumption of worldly wisdom and their display of spiritual attainments, they held themselves in high esteem. The apostles, who did not presume to draw attention to themselves or their own excellent qualities, were despised. Paul’s design in these contrasts was to emphasize the folly of self-flattery and self-exaltation and to induce the Corinthians to exalt Christ and to think humbly of themselves (cf. Matt. 23:12).

11. Unto this present hour. This phrase indicates that throughout their ministry the apostles had experienced all the trials listed in vs. 11–13. They cheerfully accepted everything that happened to them, knowing that they were being used of God for the preaching of the gospel and the salvation of sinners (see 1 Thess. 3:3, 4, 7–9; 1 Peter 2:20, 21). This sin-cursed earth is the enemy’s territory, and it is not to be expected that Christians will be permitted to live trouble-free lives if they are faithful witness for their Lord and Master (see 2 Tim. 3:12). Satan directs his wrath against those who seek to escape his clutches by fleeing to Christ. This is particularly true with respect to the remnant church (Rev. 12:17).

Naked. That is, scantily clad (see on Mark 14:52).

Buffeted. Gr. *kolaphizo*, “to smite with the fist,” “to mishandle.”

Dwelling place. The apostles wandered from country to country, and accepted the hospitality of those among whom they labored. They did not have the privilege of enjoying the comforts and convenience of a settled home. They loved the Lord, and were glad to be wanderers on the earth in order that the work of preaching the gospel might advance. That is the spirit which actuates all true laborers in the Lord’s vineyard.

12. Our own hands. Although called by God to give himself to the ministry of the gospel, Paul supported himself by manual labor (see Acts 18:3; 20:34; 1 Thess. 2:9; 2 Thess. 3:8, 9).

Being reviled, we bless. The apostles put into practice the teaching of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5:11, 12, 44). When they were ill-treated they did not retaliate, but suffered patiently. Not only did they refrain from seeking revenge, they returned good for evil (see Acts 27:33–36). The quality of bearing abuse patiently, and doing good to one's persecutors, is a prominent feature of real Christianity. It is evidence that the Holy Spirit is controlling the individual (see Gal. 5:22). Such an attitude is contrary to worldly philosophy, which teaches defense of one's rights and prompt retaliation for injuries or slights received from others (see Matt. 5:38–42). The followers of Christ are taught to leave the matter of revenge to the justice of God (see Deut. 32:35; Ps. 94:1, 4–7, 21–23; Rom. 12:19–21; MB 70, 71). There are circumstances in which it is not wrong to entertain a feeling of righteous indignation. It is to be emphasized, however, that such feelings are permissible only when one sees that "God is dishonored, and His service brought into disrepute" (DA 310). The natural, unregenerate heart must be kept crucified and never permitted to attempt to justify itself (see DA 353).

13. Defamed. Gr. *duosphēmeō*, "to slander," "to calumniate," "to defame."

Intreat. Gr. *parakaleō*, a word with various meanings (see on John 14:16). Here it probably means "to speak in a friendly manner." Compare the use of *parakaleō* in Luke 15:28; Acts 16:39.

Filth. Gr. *perikatharmata*, "dirt that collects from cleaning something." Inspired and blinded by Satan, the world looks with hatred and disgust on the faithful witnesses for Christ and regards them as the refuse of the earth (see Lam. 3:45). This was particularly true in Paul's case (see 2 Cor. 11:23–27). The Saviour sought to prepare His disciples for such experiences when He warned them that the world would not receive them kindly but would subject them to many kinds of ill-treatment (see Matt. 10:16–18, 21, 22, 36; John 15:18, 19; 9T 235). It is not to be expected that a message that is directly opposed to the way of the world and to the plans and purposes of Satan will be gladly welcomed. If the Christian finds that all is well with him, that he is not being troubled by the adversary, he may well begin to inquire as to whether there is something wrong with his relationship to God (see Luke 6:26; John 15:19). Paul rejoiced in tribulation (see Rom. 5:3; 2 Cor. 7:4). Suffering for Christ's sake will bring joy to the true believer because he knows that his testimony for Christ is bearing fruit, as evidenced by the fact that Satan is angry. This does not mean that Christians should deliberately invite persecution. They should avoid needless difficulties, but should not shirk duty because of obstacles and trials (see 9T 241, 242; DA 355).

Offscouring. Gr. *peripsēma*, "the dirt that collects in the cleaning process."

Peripsēma is synonymous with *perikatharmata*, "filth" (see above under "filth").

14. To shame you. Paul feared that he had spoken too harshly, and set about to mitigate his severe remarks. There was reason for the Corinthian church members to be put to shame on account of their striving and party quarrels, and of their conceited ideas of their own importance. With true Christian courtesy Paul was considerate of their feelings and did not desire to cause them to lose their self-respect. When those who are in error are led to see their sin, care must be exercised to prevent loss of their self-respect (see MH 167, 168).

My beloved sons. Literally, “my beloved children.” Paul claimed the believers at Corinth as his spiritual children for whom he had labored. He addressed them as a father, one who desired only their good, and who would not wish to give them pain. All undershepherds who have the mind of the Master Shepherd will constantly seek to relieve the sufferings of the sheep, to bind their wounds and alleviate their pain (see Ps. 147:3; Isa. 61:1, 2; John 10:11).

Warn. Literally, “to put in mind,” hence, “to admonish,” “to exhort.” The things presented in vs. 7–13 were not written in a spirit of harsh severity to rebuke the Corinthians. They were intended, not to discourage them, but to impart the wise counsel of a loving father who was anxious to save his children from disaster and to bring about a reformation in the church. A Christian should never reprove his brother for the purpose of embarrassing him and putting him to shame (see Rom. 14:10, 13; MH 166). The reproof or admonition should be given in a spirit of tender compassion for the erring, and with the object of helping him to find his way back into harmony with God (see Gal. 6:1, 2; DA 440; MH 495). Faithful, loving, sympathetic ministry to those who have stumbled and lost their way will be much more successful than cold condemnation and unfeeling rebuke (see James 5:20; 5T 246, 247).

15. Instructors. Gr. *paidagōgoi*, “tutors,” “guardians.” The word has been adopted into English as “pedagogue.” Originally the *paidagōgos* in a Greek household was the slave whose duty it was to take the boys to school and to look after them outside of school hours; he was not necessarily a teacher. Men of various occupations were assigned to this task. Some of them did teach the children. In English the term has been applied to teachers in general. Being a slave, the *paidagōgos* could exercise only that authority delegated to him by the head of the household, namely, that of guardianship. Paul pointed out that in spite of the fact that the Corinthians may have had many tutors, none of them could have the same relationship to them as he himself had. No other person had any claim to parental authority over them; that was the special prerogative of the apostle. He alone had the right to admonish them as a father and to receive their particular deference.

Begotten you. As in the natural sphere there can be only one father, so there could be only one spiritual father of the church at Corinth, namely, the apostle Paul, for it was in response to his preaching that they were led to forsake idolatry and to turn to the living God (see Acts 18:10, 11, 18; 1 Cor. 3:6). He was the instrument of their conversion.

16. Followers. Literally, “mimics,” “imitators.” This is a bold statement for any Christian minister to make. But it is true that every worker for God should live a life that reflects the image of Jesus, so that he may, with confidence, call upon those to whom he ministers to follow his example. It is natural for children to imitate their parents and copy their mode of life. Since the Corinthians were Paul’s spiritual children, it was logical that they should be expected to imitate the apostle in his relationship to God. Knowing that children copy their parents, every minister should be ever conscious of the weighty responsibility that rests upon him to set the proper example of godly living before those to whom he is presenting the gospel. His consecration was so complete, so unreserved, that Paul could say, “Christ liveth in me” (Gal. 2:20). This gave him the assurance that enabled him to call upon those whom he led to the Saviour, to follow him (see Phil. 3:17; 2 Thess. 3:7). It is true that church members should look to Christ as their example, but humanity is frail, and men are prone to look to their leaders. This makes it imperative for

ministers to be extremely careful about setting a right example before the members (see Titus 2:6–8; 1T 446; 2T 336, 548, 549).

17. *I sent.* In letter writing the Greeks sometimes used the past tense to describe present action, because the action, when the letter would be read by the recipient, would be in the past. According to ch. 16:10 Timothy was probably on his way but had not yet arrived, nor apparently was he expected to arrive ahead of the letter. The letter was doubtless sent in order to advise the church to welcome the apostle's representative fittingly, and to give heed to his counsel and instruction as though it came from Paul himself.

Timotheus. Or, "Timothy" (see Acts 16:1; 19:22; Phil. 2:19; 1 Thess. 3:2; 1 Tim. 1:2). Timothy was a trusted associate upon whom Paul relied in his work of caring for the churches that he had established.

My beloved son. Literally, "my beloved child." Paul saw in the young man Timothy one who could be developed into a useful worker for God, so he chose him to be one of his traveling companions and helpers (see Acts 16:1–4; 1 Tim. 1:2; AA 184, 185, 202, 203; GW 440). The apostle had addressed the Corinthians as "sons," literally, "children" (1 Cor. 4:14); therefore it was quite appropriate to send one to represent him who had been begotten in Christ through the agency of his preaching, even as they. As a close companion of the apostle in his journeys and his evangelistic work, Timothy was well qualified to review Paul's teachings and call to their minds his manner of life.

In every church. The message of Paul was the same wherever he preached. He had not taught the Corinthians anything different from what he had taught the Ephesians or the Beroeans. His public preaching and his personal conduct were the same everywhere. He desired the church at Corinth to be in harmony with all the other churches. Christ prayed for unity among His followers (see John 17:21–23), and doctrinal unanimity contributes to such unity (see Rom. 15:5, 6; 1 Cor. 1:10; Eph. 4:3–6; Phil. 2:2; 1T 210).

18. *Puffed up.* Paul says in effect, "Because I have been delayed in my plans to visit you, some of you are inflated with pride, believing that I dare not come to Corinth. You no doubt feel that your declaration of allegiance to other leaders has made me afraid, and that all I will do is write letters of rebuke and warning." The fact that he sent Timothy, and Titus (see 2 Cor. 7:6, 7, 14, 15), to Corinth may have influenced his enemies to believe that he himself was afraid to venture among them.

19. *But I will come.* He planned to stay till after Pentecost (ch. 16:8). In 2 Cor. 1:23 he explains the unexpected delay in his coming.

If the Lord will. It was Paul's constant desire to do nothing save that which was in harmony with the will of his Master. All his plans were subject to divine approval or rejection. He considered the matter of setting out on a journey as dependent on the will of God, and was ready to go or stay, as the Lord might indicate (cf. Acts 18:21; 1 Cor. 16:7; Heb. 6:3). This is an example of Christian conduct that all should follow. All our plans should be made with the thought in mind that they will be followed out or laid aside according to God's will (see Prov. 27:1; James 4:15).

The power. The apostle would visit Corinth and examine, not the empty boasting of those who confidently asserted that he was afraid to come, but their real power. This sentence reveals the confident courage of the apostle, courage born of the knowledge that he was doing God's will and teaching truth. Such is the confidence and boldness in performance of duty that all God's ministers should have. Irrespective of all opposition

made by any man or company of men, within or without the church, they are to discharge their duty faithfully (see Deut. 1:17; Isa. 50:7; Acts 5:29).

20. Kingdom of God. Here the kingdom of grace as in Col. 4:11; etc. (see on Matt. 3:2; 4:17; 5:3).

Not in word. God's spiritual kingdom on earth is not established or administered by boastful claims and the vain words of men. Something more is required than confident assertions of authority by those who, not willing to abide by the simplicity of the gospel message, add to it their own interpretations of truth and exalt themselves to positions of leadership and authority (see Dan. 7:25; 11:36; 2 Thess. 2:3, 4; Rev. 13:5, 6).

Power. Gr. *dunamis*, "force," "might," "strength." Our English word "dynamite" is derived from *dunamis*. The church of God is sustained by the power of the Holy Spirit, operating in the lives of wholly consecrated believers. Every addition to the church of God is brought about by the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit (see John 3:5; 16:13). The leaders of the church are guided by the Spirit of God and empowered by Him for the wise administration of His kingdom on earth (see Acts 1:8; 2:17, 18; 13:1–4).

21. What will ye? This is Paul's appeal to the unruly believers. It reveals the apostle's reluctance to adopt severe measures in dealing with the unruly members of the church at Corinth.

Rod. The symbol of fatherly severity. It shows that Paul realized that as an apostle, and also as their original instructor in the gospel, he had authority to administer discipline to the rebellious church. No doubt the "rod" which he would use, if necessary, would be his words. There are occasions when it is necessary for God's servants to use some severity in correcting unruly members of the church (see Num. 16:8–11, 26, 28–30; Matt. 18:15–17; Acts 5:3, 4, 8, 9).

Love. Correction should always be administered in love, with the ultimate welfare and happiness of the offender in view (cf. Gal. 6:1, 2). Although it may be necessary to act firmly and perhaps severely in order to preserve the church from confusion and strife, nevertheless everything should be tempered by a true regard for the best spiritual interests of the persons concerned. Love, which has as its object the best interests of the beloved, must underlie every phase of Christian life and duty, for God Himself is the personification of love (1 John 4:8, 16).

Spirit of meekness. That is, mildly, in an attitude of tenderness. Paul here reveals that he wished to avoid the necessity of exercising severe discipline toward them. He hoped that their "puffed up" hearts would soften and that they would readily accept his loving advice without making it necessary for him to resort to harsh disciplinary measures.

With a yearning appeal the apostle closes this part of the epistle. In this section Paul has dealt candidly with the facts of the situation, placing them in contrast with the pride and pretense that were clouding the spiritual vision of many members of the church at Corinth.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1–7AA 276

2 Ed 139; MYP 319; 9T 246

5 AA 73; GC 481, 660; MB 124; PP 386; SC 24; 1T 333; 2T 626; 4T 590

7 MB 57; MH 166; 5T 735

- 9 CH 575; Ed 154; FE 186, 230, 289; MYP 353; Te 144; TM 447; 1T 336; 2T 441, 631, 709; 4T 35, 641; 5T 84, 526, 578; 6T 13, 144; 7T 173, 294, 296; 8T 134, 235
 11, 12 AA 354; 1T 447
 11–15AA 277
 12, 13 AA 296; Ed 68
 13 9T 236

CHAPTER 5

1 *The incestuous person 6 is cause rather of shame unto them, than of rejoicing. 7 The old leaven is to be purged out. 10 Heinous offenders are to be shunned and avoided.*

1. It is reported. The new subject, dealing with the case of scandalous incest in the church, is abruptly introduced. This case, like the matter of the factions, had not been mentioned in the letter written by the church to Paul (see on ch. 7:1). It was probably reported by the members of Chloe's household (see ch. 1:11).

Commonly. Gr. *holōs*, "actually," or "generally." The report given to the apostle was beyond question a statement of absolute fact. It was a matter of general knowledge among the believers, and this made their attitude toward the offender the more reprehensible.

Fornication. Gr. *porneia*. This word, appearing twice in this verse, is a general term describing illicit sexual relationships whether between married or unmarried persons (see Matt. 5:32; Acts 15:20).

Named. Textual evidence attests (cf. p. 10) the omission of this word. The reading then would be "such fornication as is not among the Gentiles." It would be bad enough if the report concerned *any* form of immorality, but that which existed at Corinth was of a nature that even heathen people condemned. This was indeed a cause of amazement and wonder to Paul, and to any person who knew the exalted standard of purity held before the believer in Jesus (see Ex. 20:14; Matt. 5:8, 27–32; 1 Cor. 6:9, 10; Gal. 5:19–21; Eph. 5:5; Rev. 21:8). That a crime which even heathen people would regard with abhorrence should be tolerated in a Christian church greatly aggravated the offense, and called for immediate and drastic action.

One should have. The Greek may mean that he had either married her or that he was simply maintaining her for immoral purposes. The father may earlier have died or his wife may have run away or have been divorced by him.

His father's wife. Not his mother, but another wife of his father's. The two are distinguished in Lev. 18:6–8. The crime was punishable by death (Lev. 20:11). The penalty was not relaxed in the Mishnaic period. The Mishnah contains the following: "The following are stoned: he who commits incest with his mother, his father's wife, or his daughter-in-law ..." (*Sanhedrin* 7. 4, Soncino ed. of the Talmud, p. 359). Roman law also forbade the relationship (Gaius *Institutes* i. 63).

2. Ye are puffed up. The surprising thing was that the church members were self-complacent, proud of their spiritual status, instead of hanging their heads in shame that such great wickedness had broken out in their midst. This does not mean that they were elated or proud because of this evil thing in the church, but they were filled with spiritual pride in spite of it. They should have humbled themselves before the Lord and taken steps to remedy the situation.

Mourned. The presence of gross wickedness in the church is always a cause for sorrow to those members who have the best interests of their brethren at heart, and who are jealous for the good name of the church (see Jer. 13:17). The Lord makes it plain that those who truly mourn on account of the wrongs that prevail in the church will be spared in the time of test (see Eze. 9:4–6; 2 Peter 2:8, 9). The righteous cannot be self-satisfied and happy when a brother in the church loses his way and falls into grievous sin. The Corinthian believers should have been much concerned over the evil in their midst and should have proceeded to remove the offender from the church. Such disciplinary measures should be conducted from proper motives. Never should anger, pride, revenge, party feelings, dislike, or any carnal sentiment of the natural heart prompt the church members to take action against an offending brother. On the contrary there should be compassionate love and tender pity manifested toward him, together with care lest anyone else fall into the same error (see Rom. 15:1; Gal. 6:1; James 5:19, 20).

Taken away. A person living in such deliberate and dreadful immorality should be expelled from the church. God does not bless His people when they knowingly permit open transgression of His law to continue among them (see Joshua 7:1, 5, 11, 12; Acts 5:1–11; 3T 265, 266, 269–272).

3. Present in spirit. Paul was in Ephesus when he wrote the epistle (see p. 103), but his knowledge of the situation as it had been revealed to him by the household of Chloe (ch. 1:11) and by divine revelations (see AA 302) enabled him to judge the case as if he had been actually present.

Have judged. Or, “have passed sentence.” Paul had given careful thought to the case, the facts of which were well known (v. 1), and had formed his decision. The course that should be followed was plain, and the apostle gave authoritative instructions to the church regarding the treatment of the offender. Immediate and drastic action was called for in this well-established case of open defiance of God’s law.

4. In the name. The sentence against the incestuous person was to be made by the authority of Jesus Christ, the head of the church (Eph. 5:24). His power was to be called on to make the sentence effective both in its spiritual application and in its relation to the physical separation of the guilty one from the church. The expression “in his name,” referring to Christ, is found in Matt. 12:21; Luke 24:47 with the idea of Jesus being the source of power and authority (see on Acts 3:16). Paul, as the divinely appointed apostle to the Gentiles (Acts 9:15; 13:2, 4; 22:21; Gal. 2:7, 8), exercised the authority delegated to him by Christ to tell the church at Corinth what should be done regarding this particular case.

Gathered together. It is the Redeemer’s plan to work through His church. The leaders of the church, together with the congregation, are empowered to take disciplinary action in the name of Christ when this becomes necessary, and such action, when proper procedures have been followed, is ratified in heaven (see on Matt. 16:19; cf. Matt. 18:15–20; John 20:23; 3T 428). It is to be noted that Paul did not assume the role of a dictator. He told them what his opinion was, and instructed them to assemble for the purpose of deciding this particular problem. He would not presume to administer discipline without the agreement of the church itself. This incident shows that no minister may claim the authority to decide the nature of disciplinary action and execute it without consulting the church. God Himself respects the authority that He has delegated to His church, and works through His own appointed agency for the conduct of His work on earth. An

illustration of this plan is seen in the matter of Paul's conversion. God directed one of the brethren of the company of believers at Damascus to visit the humbled Pharisee and pass on to him God's instructions (see Acts 9:10–18; 3T 430, 431).

My spirit. See on v. 3.

Power of our Lord. Jesus promised that His power would be present with His church when they “gathered together” in His name (see Matt. 18:18–20).

5. To deliver. Paul now states his carefully considered opinion regarding the sentence that the church ought to pass on such a wicked member. This is generally understood to be a sentence disfellowshipping the man from the church.

Unto Satan. There are only two spiritual kingdoms in this world, the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan. If a person leaves the kingdom of God, he must naturally enter the kingdom of Satan (see John 12:31; 16:11; 2 Cor. 4:4). This defiant and abandoned sinner had, by his own sinful conduct, withdrawn himself from the kingdom of God, and this was to be recognized by his official expulsion from the church. Compare 1 Tim. 1:20.

Destruction of the flesh. The Scriptures term immoral practices “works of the flesh” (Gal. 5:19; cf. Col. 3:5). Christians are admonished not to live “after the flesh” (Rom. 8:13). The “destruction of the flesh” may therefore be understood as a mortification of the fleshy desires. The idea of bodily suffering, which Satan often inflicts, may also be involved. Paul called his own affliction “the messenger of Satan” (2 Cor. 12:7). Satan is the author of disease and suffering (see on John 9:2). The wicked person would be left to suffer the consequences of his evil course.

The spirit. Men are given new bodies in the resurrection (see on ch. 15:50). Our present bodies return to dust at death (see Gen. 3:19).

May be saved. The purpose of the action here described was remedial. This was true also in the case of Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom Paul “delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme” (1 Tim. 1:20). Church discipline is intended to awaken offenders to a realization of their dangerous situation and to reveal to them their need of repentance and contrition. Having been corrected and humbled by his punishment, the sinner may be recalled to a life of virtue and faith. The aim of church punishment should never be vengeance, but recovery from ruin. The disfellowship member should be an object of deep concern to the church, and strenuous efforts should be made for his spiritual restoration (see Matt. 18:17; Rom. 15:1; Gal. 6:1, 2; Heb. 12:13).

6. Glorifying. Gr. *kauchēma*, “that which is boasted about,” not the act of boasting. The Corinthian believers had no basis for confident boasting in their spiritual condition. They sought to give the impression that all was well in the church. This was evidence of their spiritual blindness. They had become so familiar with the evil practices around them that they did not sense the terrible nature of the immorality that existed in their midst.

Not good. Boasting of personal achievements is always wrong because it is a form of pride and exaltation of self. “It is a wicked pride that delights in the vanity of one's own works, that boasts of one's excellent qualities” (4T 223). If a vision of Calvary is kept in view, all human boasting will be excluded (see Jer. 9:23, 24; 1 Cor. 1:29–31; Gal. 6:14).

A little leaven. The same saying appears in Gal. 5:9. Paul expressed surprise that the Corinthians, by their boasting of their satisfactory condition, showed that they had forgotten the vital truth of this well-known saying. As a small amount of leaven, or yeast, placed in a large quantity of dough affects the entire amount, so the presence of one

defiant transgressor in the church has a corrupting influence on the whole body. See on Matt. 13:33.

To retain in the church a grossly offending member, because of a desire to help him to reform, overlooks the danger of his influence on the whole group of believers. It is often more helpful to the individual to separate him from the church so as to let him realize that his actions are out of harmony with its high standards and cannot be tolerated (see 7T 263; 3T 450–455).

7. *Purge out.* Gr. *ekkathairō*, “to cleanse thoroughly.” Paul calls for a complete removal of that which is harmful to the church. It is not only a question of disfellowshipping the licentious person; it is an exhortation to awaken all to the seriousness of being complacent and self-satisfied while such evils exist in the church.

Old leaven. “Leaven” is here used to represent sin (cf. Matt. 16:6; DA 407, 408; PP 278). The Jews had been instructed to search their houses carefully before eating the Passover supper, to make sure that there was not even a particle of leavened bread in their homes (see Ex. 12:19; 13:7). Similarly the Christian church at Corinth was instructed to make certain that sin was put away, particularly all forms of immorality.

A new lump. By expelling the offenders from the church and turning away from all sin, the church would become pure and free from the corrupting influence of cherished wrongdoing. It would be like a fresh portion of flour, or dough, before the addition of any leaven. They would then partake of the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit.

As ye are unleavened. That is, ideally speaking. The Corinthian believers had been cleansed from sin. They were to keep this fact in mind and ever strive to maintain their purity. All who accept the provision made for their salvation through Jesus Christ are obligated by their profession of faith in Him to be pure, “even as he is pure” (1 John 3:2, 3; cf. ch. 2:6). The perfect example of Christian living had been set before them in Jesus, and their lives should have been continual illustrations of victorious living in the power of Christ (see 1 Cor. 1:4–8).

Christ our passover. “The slaying of the Passover lamb was a shadow of the death of Christ” (GC 399; cf. PP 274, 277). The Passover feast was also a memorial of the deliverance from Egypt. On the night of the deliverance the destroying angel passed over the homes where the blood was seen on the doorposts (see Ex. 11:7; 12:29; PP 279). Once again in the closing days of the history of this world the destroying angel is to go forth on his fearful mission, and only those who have put away the leaven of sin, and have taken their stand under the blood of the antitypical Passover Lamb, Jesus Christ, will be spared (see on Eze. 9:1–6; see Rev. 7:1–3; 14:1–5; TM 445; 3T 266, 267; 5T 210, 212, 216, 505). The church of God must be a pure church. It must be entirely free from all corruption and imperfection, such as are here typified by “leaven” (see Matt. 5:48; Eph. 1:4; 5:27). It must be covered by the blood of Jesus, who is here set forth as the antitypical Passover Lamb.

8. *Let us keep.* The Greek means, “let us continue keeping.” The Christian should continually keep himself free from the defilement of sin. That is, “old leaven” should ever be kept purged out of his soul. It was in the spring of the year, probably near the Passover season, that the epistle was written (see p. 103).

Not with old leaven. A call to abandon the old way of life, with the corrupt feelings and passions that are prompted by the desires of the unrenewed heart.

Malice. Gr. *kakia*, “ill will,” “wickedness,” or “evil” in general. Probably the use of the word here refers primarily to the ill feeling that had caused the factions or parties in the church at Corinth (ch. 1:11–13). Division into separate groups within the church, each at variance with the others and contending for supremacy, increases such envy and ill feeling.

Wickedness. Here, probably a special reference to the immorality for which the apostle had reproved the Corinthians (see 1 Cor. 5:1; cf. 2 Cor. 12:21). Christians who have surrendered to Jesus and who have been born again will not retain their former evil desires and practices. These are all put away when they “put on” Christ (see Gal. 3:27; 5:24–26). It is by studying the Scriptures and bringing the life into harmony with the will of God that we “keep the feast” (see Jer. 15:16; Eze. 3:1, 3; Matt. 4:4; John 6:63; Heb. 4:12).

Sincerity and truth. In his life a real Christian is so straightforward, pure, and true in all respects that his genuineness is apparent to all. There is no hidden taint of sin or unbelief, which, like leaven, affects the entire man, although not seen from the outside. As the Passover bread was free from even the smallest particle of leaven, so the character of the true child of God is completely free from all compromise with evil. “Real piety begins when all compromise with sin is at an end” (MB 91).

9. In an epistle. Literally, “in the epistle,” which may also be rendered “in my epistle,” that is, in my letter. This can hardly be understood of the letter he is now writing, for it does not contain the injunction here referred to. Furthermore, if Paul was referring to the letter he was writing, the phrase “in my letter” would be unnecessary. This letter is not now extant. That it was the apostle’s habit to write letters to the churches is evident from 2 Cor. 10:9, 10. The letters preserved in the NT for our benefit form only part of the total instruction given through Paul to the many groups of believers whom he had organized into churches.

Company with. Gr. *sunanamignumi*, “to mix up together,” “to have close or habitual association with.” Compare the use of the word in 2 Thess. 3:14. God does not want His people to be exposed to the corrupting influence of rebellious sinners, and He warns believers not to get on intimate terms with them. It is not a prohibition against speaking to them or attempting to reclaim them, but against maintaining close, friendly relations with them.

Fornicators. This term refers to those depraved individuals who indulge in unlawful sexual intercourse for gain, or simply for the gratification of their own lustful desires. Such practices are abhorrent to the Lord (see 1 Cor. 6:9, 10; Gal. 5:19–21; Eph. 5:5; 1 Tim. 1:9, 10; Rev. 21:8; 22:15).

10. Of this world. That is, the unbelieving sinners who are outside the church and make no profession of acceptance of the way of Christ. Paul does not teach in this verse that Christians should not have any dealings at all with non-Christians or unbelievers. That would be altogether impracticable. Licentiousness was so common among the Corinthians that it would not be possible to carry on the ordinary affairs of life, such as buying and selling, without coming in contact with it. In His prayer for His followers Jesus made it clear that His people will remain in contact with the unbelieving world around them, but they are not to partake of its spirit (John 17:14–16).

Covetous. Gr. *pleonektai*, from *pleon*, “more,” and *echō*, “to have.” It describes those who want more and more.

Extortioners. This refers to that class of persons who, in their greed for material wealth, oppress the poor and unfortunate. They are devoid of pity and compassion. They are so enslaved by their own selfish lust for money that they will use any method to gain their objective. They have no regard for the claims of decency and kindness (see Ps. 109:11).

Idolaters. The vast majority of the inhabitants of Corinth were idol worshipers. An idolater may be defined as one who devotes his mind to anything that takes the place of God. Christians must avoid intimate association with those who do not place God first and foremost in their thoughts, words, and deeds. The mind must be kept under rigid control at all times, lest worldly thoughts, ideas, and principles be allowed to guide the life instead of the pure and holy principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ (see 2 Cor. 10:5).

Out of the world. As long as Christians are in this world, they will be in contact with impenitent sinners who do not understand the awful nature of the evil practices mentioned in this verse. They are not to be hermits and isolate themselves from society. They have a definite duty to perform for the unbelieving world. They are commanded to bear testimony to the world of the saving power of the gospel of Jesus Christ. To do this they must of necessity maintain contact with the world. Their association with unbelievers must not be of the same kind as with believers (see 2 Cor. 6:14–16). Jesus moved among the people of the world; He visited them in their homes and partook of their hospitality (see Matt. 4:23–25; 9:10–13; Luke 19:5–7). The purpose of His association with them was to minister to their needs. He imparted to them a knowledge of the Father and offered them salvation from sin (see DA 150–152). Such is to be the constant objective of the Christian’s association with unbelievers. God does not desire His people to adopt an attitude of aloofness from the world. He expects them to take part in various lawful affairs of the world, and at the same time to bear testimony against the sins of the world.

11. I have written. Or, “I write.” The Greek may be understood either way. “I have written” would refer to Paul’s previous letter (see on v. 9); “I write,” to his present letter. Several other wicked practices are included with fornication in the list of sins that exclude a person from free and intimate fellowship with the saints. Believers are to keep themselves entirely separate from any person professing to be a Christian who is guilty of such things. Those who cling to immoral ways, in spite of their knowledge that God condemns all impurity, are without excuse. There is no valid reason for believers to hold familiar association with them.

Covetous, or an idolater. See on v. 10.

Railer. Or, “reviler,” one who heaps abuse or reproach upon others. Christians who form the habit of using abusive language are to be excluded from fellowship with the church. The natural tendency to meet insult with insult, reproach with reproach, abuse with abuse, unkindness with unkindness, is directly opposed to the spirit of Christ, who, “when he was reviled, reviled not again” (1 Peter 2:23). Compare 1 Cor. 6:10; Eph. 4:31; 1 Tim. 6:4; James 1:26; 3:5, 6, 10, 14; 4:11; 1 Peter 3:8–10.

Drunkard. Drunkenness is one of the works of the flesh (Gal. 5:19, 21). See on Prov. 20:1.

Extortioner. See on v. 10.

Not to eat. A specific example of the more general prohibition of the earlier part of the verse. The prohibition includes social meals (cf. Gal. 2:12) as well as the Lord's Supper (DA 656). Believers should do nothing that would give observers reason to believe that defiant transgressors of God's law are recognized as Christian brothers in good standing (see 2 John 10, 11). The standard of truth and purity must be held high. This was particularly important in Corinth in Paul's day. The enemies of Christianity accused believers of various forms of crime and vice. If it became known that Christians tolerated in their midst, or had close contact with, wicked and immoral persons, those accusations and reports would receive support and be considered reliable. Therefore it was necessary to withdraw completely from wickedly impenitent apostates and let it be known that the church had no connection with them. Only thus could the church be kept pure and free from the contaminating influence of apostate sinners who refused to repent and give up their wickedness.

12. That are without. Paul stated that he knew he had no right or authority that would entitle him to exercise jurisdiction over anyone outside the church. His counsel and instruction were for church members. His office as a Christian apostle did not entitle him to discipline or punish those who were not Christians. He addressed himself only to "them that are within."

Them that are within. The church has power to discipline its own members, but it has no power to control nonmembers. Paul made it clear that it was the duty of the church in Corinth to use its authority to deal effectively with the openly and defiantly erring member.

13. God judgeth. The thoughts, words, and deeds of all men are examined by God. Whether a man acknowledges the divine rulership or not, God is the one who evaluates all the details of his life and approves or condemns according to His all-wise justice (see Gen. 18:25; Ps. 50:6; 75:7; 94:1–10; Acts 10:42). This knowledge of the certain justice of God helps the believer to be calm under abuse and ill treatment. He knows that God is watching over him and will ultimately vindicate him (see Matt. 5:10–12; Luke 6:22, 23).

Therefore. Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 10) the omission of this word. The words "put away from among yourselves that wicked person" are a quotation from Deut. 17:7, agreeing with the LXX rather than the Hebrew.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

- 1 AA 303
- 6 AH 460; FE 55; 4T 203, 489
- 6, 7 AA 304
- 7 GC 399; PP 277
- 7, 8 PP 278
- 8 COL 96
- 9 AA 300
- 11 DA 656
- 13 AA 304

CHAPTER 6

- 1 *The Corinthians must not vex their brethren, in going to law with them: 6 especially under infidels. 9 The unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God. 15 Our bodies are the members of Christ, 19 and temples of the Holy Ghost. 16, 17 They must not therefore be defiled.*

1. Dare any of you. Paul now deals with another serious error in the church, that of church members going to law before heathen judges instead of settling their differences among themselves. Such a course was contrary to the teachings of Christ (see Matt. 18:15–17) and hence out of harmony with the nature of Christianity. The feeling expressed in the phrase, “dare any of you,” is one of surprise that any church member would have the temerity to take a fellow believer to a heathen court to settle a quarrel. Do you not fear, suggested the apostle, to expose the weaknesses of church members before those who do not love the Lord?

Having a matter. As long as we are in this sinful world there will be differences of opinion among men, even in the church of God. These cannot be avoided, but care must be exercised in selecting the right method for settling them, and in manifesting the proper spirit when such a settlement is sought. The existence of serious differences of opinion in the church indicates an absence of that spirit of unity and love that Christ prayed for shortly before His crucifixion (see John 17:11, 21–26).

Against another. Obviously the responsibility for taking the matter before unbelievers is laid upon the plaintiff. He has the privilege of selecting the tribunal before which he would have his case examined. “Another” here has reference to another believer. It would not be practical to bring unbelievers before the church for trial. This discussion deals with difficulties between church members.

Unjust. Gr. *adikoi*, “unrighteous.” The term is here contrasted with “saints” and refers to non-Christians. It does not necessarily imply that heathen courts were always unjust in their decisions, or that one could never hope to obtain justice from them.

The saints. The Jews did not permit their disputes to go before Gentile courts. It was a law among them that differences between Jews should be referred to the consideration of approved men of their own faith and nation (see Talmud *Gittin* 88b, Soncino ed., pp. 429, 430). Gallio, the Roman deputy at Corinth, apparently knew this when he refused to listen to the accusations made by the Jews against Paul (see Acts 18:15). Christians who took their differences to heathen tribunals thereby admitted that their communal loyalty to the church was inferior to that of the Jews.

The Lord Himself gave instruction concerning the procedure to be followed for settling troubles between church members (see Matt. 18:15–18). For brother to go to law against brother brings dishonor to the church and belittles the power of God to guide and control His people in all the affairs of their lives (see AA 306).

2. Do ye not know? In other words, Have you not received the information I am about to impart; or have your senses become so dulled by your departure from right principles that you do not perceive the truth in this matter? There are those who are extremely sensitive concerning what they are pleased to call their “rights.” Such persons take offense easily, when no offense is intended. The true cause for this jealous regard for their rights is self-love. When the repentant sinner really surrenders self to Christ, he no longer seeks to defend self, but is continually concerned about doing the will of God. Pride is at the root of most disputes that arise in the church; but there is no room for pride in the heart of him who understands his great indebtedness to Jesus. The truly converted child of God will be on the alert to see what he can do to help his brother along life’s road, rather than to spend time cherishing imagined insults and offenses (see Isa. 57:15; Rom. 12:10; 15:1–3; Gal. 5:14; Phil. 3:7, 8; see on Matt. 7:12; 18:1–35).

Judge the world. This is a reference to a period following the second advent of Christ. The saints ascend to heaven with Christ at His second advent (John 14:1–3; 1 Thess. 4:16, 17); there they are seated on thrones to share with Jesus His authority and power to judge and execute judgment (Rev. 20:4; cf. on Dan. 7:22). The saints will judge the fallen angels (1 Cor. 6:3) and unrepentant human beings who have not made peace with God through Jesus Christ. This work will be done during the millennium, that is, the thousand years that elapse before Christ, with the saints, comes back to this earth (Rev. 20:4, 6). The judgment of the wicked will take the form of an examination of the records of their lives, and the apportioning of the punishment to be meted out to them. Their destruction has already been settled by their voluntary rejection of God’s offer of salvation through Christ, by which rejection they have deliberately chosen eternal death. The examination of the life records of the wicked will enable the righteous to see the justice of God and the appropriateness of His dealings with those who remain rebellious to the end (Rev. 15:3; see GC 661; cf. 544).

Are ye unworthy? In view of the part the saints will have in the judgment of the wicked, should they not be able to settle the differences that arise in the church without exposing their quarrels to unbelievers? Troubles among church members should certainly be small compared with those of the wicked. Surely the believers, guided by the Holy Spirit, should be competent to deal with these. If a church member refuses to respond to the counsel of the brethren when he is approached in the manner described in Matt. 18:15–17, he automatically places himself outside the circle of the believers, and is to be treated as an unbeliever (v. 17). When a church member allows his faith to decrease to the point where he loses hold on Christ and permits his unregenerate heart stubbornly to refuse to be reconciled to his brother, he is not worthy to be called a Christian. He should be regarded as in need of conversion. Such a person should be labored with in the spirit of Jesus, and every effort put forth to win him back to the fold (see Gal. 6:1; Heb. 12:12–15; James 5:19, 20).

Matters. Gr. *kritēria*, “tribunals,” or perhaps “cases” (cf. on v. 4).

3. *We shall judge angels.* The angels referred to in this verse must be those who rebelled and later were cast out of heaven along with their leader (Rev. 12:7–9; 2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6). There is no reason why unfallen angels should be judged. This judging will take place during the millennium (see on 1 Cor. 6:2).

How much more. Men who were created lower than angels, but have been raised by redemption to a condition superior to the angels who feel, are well able to make decisions relating to the affairs of this life.

To this life. In comparison with the responsibility of sharing in a work of judgment that affects the eternal destiny of fallen angels and wicked men, the question of settling problems related to worldly matters is relatively simple. This weighty argument is enough to prove that the saints ought to be capable of making just decisions relative to differences that occur between church members concerning temporal matters.

4. *Judgments.* Or, “tribunals.” Accordingly, the first clause of this verse could read: “If you find it necessary to hold tribunals [or courts] for the settlement of secular matters related to your private lives.”

Set. Gr. *kathizō*, “to cause to sit,” “to appoint.” The sentence may be either interrogative, “do ye set?” or imperative, as in the KJV. In the light of the context, especially v. 5, the translation “do ye set?” seems preferable. There seems to be a trace of

sarcasm in Paul's question, which may be paraphrased thus: "Will you choose as judges heathen, unbelieving magistrates, who have no respect for the true God, and who are treated with contempt by the church?" It is not likely that the church would be instructed to select the least capable members to serve as judges of everyday difficulties that arise between brethren. In v. 5 the apostle implies that the church should seek out a "wise man" to handle such situations. In order to appreciate the advice found in v. 4, it is necessary to know something about the heathen law courts of Paul's day. It is not to be expected that men outside the pale of Christianity would consistently dispense justice fairly. The courts of the heathen were often exceedingly corrupt. Many of the judges were abandoned characters, who lived dissolute lives, and who were easily bribed. Surely Christians could not place any confidence in their judgment. The church at Corinth was reproved for taking their cases to such men.

5. To your shame. Paul has dealt with the situation regarding lawsuits between brethren as plainly and forcefully as possible, in order to move the church members to a feeling of shame. He desired them to realize that they were not setting an example of victorious Christian living before the heathen. Church members should keep personal feelings and desires in subjection and give priority to the things that concern the welfare of the church. Differences between brethren must not be allowed to overshadow the good of the church.

Wise man. The Corinthians boasted of their wisdom and intelligence, and considered themselves superior to other people around them. If that was so, then surely they would be able to find someone in the church who could make wise and just decisions concerning differences between brethren. If their city was as refined and enlightened as they claimed it to be, it would indeed be strange if they could not appoint one of the church members to settle their troubles, one in whom the brethren would have confidence, one whose judgments would be accepted by the contending parties. It is not hard to see the somewhat sarcastic reproof that Paul here administers.

6. Brother goeth to law. See on v. 1. It was bad enough for brethren to quarrel to the extent that they could not be reconciled to one another and must take their troubles to court, but it was much worse to go to a court composed of "unbelievers." This was a striking demonstration of the believers' loss of vision of their high and holy calling as sons and daughters of the Creator of the universe (see Heb. 3:1; 1 John 3:1, 2). They allowed the old sinful, unregenerate heart to assert itself and demand compensation for some injury to self, instead of exalting Christ, forgetting their differences, and covering everything with silent love (see Prov. 10:12; 17:9; 1 Cor. 13:4; 1 Peter 4:8).

Unbelievers. Gr. *apistoi*, literally, "ones without faith." In v. 1 they are termed "unjust," that is, unrighteous. Those who do not have faith in the only true God, and who, by virtue of their lack of knowledge of God and the principles of His kingdom, do not understand or practice righteousness are not fit persons to settle differences between Christian brethren. Therefore it is inexcusable for the believers to air their grievances before those "unbelievers." This principle is as applicable today as it was in Paul's time. It is ever a shame for the people of God to turn away from the divine plan for the adjustment of their differences, and to seek guidance from unbelievers (see 5T 242, 243).

7. Fault. Gr. *hēttēma*, "defeat." The course the Corinthian Christians were following was a defeat for them. Personal differences are frequently prompted by the old, carnal nature that was supposedly crucified with Christ when the sinner was converted (see Gal.

2:20; 3:27). These promptings should be instantly repressed. Unfortunately they are frequently not immediately dismissed, but are allowed to develop into resentment, injured pride, and ungodly desire for revenge and recompense. The relationship with God is interrupted and the soul is alienated from Him, its source of peace. By bringing lawsuits against each other Christians show that they have lost the mutual forbearance, patience, and love that are the guiding motives in the hearts of true followers of the Master. The prayer of Christ for perfect unity among His followers (John 17:11, 21–23) positively forbids them to allow their selfish feelings to develop into quarrels that call for settlement by courts of law.

Rather take wrong. Paul has been presenting the Christian way whereby a member of the church should seek equity when the one who he believes has wronged him is also a church member. There is no sin in seeking to secure that which rightfully belongs to one; for example, for a laborer to seek to secure the wages he has lawfully earned from an employer. But, as Paul has declared, there is a wrong in going before secular tribunals to secure adjudication of differences between brethren. Members of the church are answerable to its authority, and should look to it to adjudicate their differences.

If a member brings a matter to the church and the church gives its judgment, he should be willing to abide by that judgment, even though he is not satisfied with it. For him to come before the church for adjudication of a matter, with a mental reservation that he will abide by the judgment only if it is in his favor, is to be guilty of failing to act in harmony with the obvious intent of Paul's counsel.

If a member has brought a matter to the church, and the church declines to exercise its judicial duty, then he has exhausted the possibilities of the procedure that Paul here outlines. What he shall do beyond that point is a matter for his individual conscience. Christian leadership through the centuries has never felt clear to declare that a member is a sinner before God, because, under these circumstances, he seeks adjudication of his case before a secular tribunal.

However, the whole tenor of Christian teaching suggests that it would be much better for a church member, patiently and quietly, to suffer insult, injury, or loss from another member than to seek satisfaction by going to law about the matter. The example of Jesus Himself is sufficient for every truly consecrated Christian. The Saviour was wronged more than any man, but the record says, "he opened not his mouth" (Isa. 53:7; cf. Matt. 27:12). The spirit of retaliation and self-justification is a direct denial of Christ, and all who adopt it place themselves in that class of whom Jesus said, "him will I also deny before my Father" (Matt. 10:33; cf. Mark 8:38; 2 Tim. 2:12). The Lord teaches His children to be willing to suffer wrong with patience and without complaint (see Prov. 20:22; Matt. 5:39–41; Rom. 12:17, 19–21; 1 Thess. 5:15). The inconvenience and suffering of an individual member would be a lesser evil than the injury that the church would suffer by lawsuits between Christian brethren before civil courts. Christians should love the cause of their Saviour more than their own personal interests. They ought to be more anxious that the cause of Christ be not injured or hindered than that they themselves be spared loss.

Defrauded. Gr. *apostereō*, "to rob," "to deprive," "to despoil." Whether it be a matter of personal insult or loss of material possessions, Paul counsels that it is better for a church member to permit himself to be unjustly deprived of property or to suffer falsely

than to expose his trouble with another member before unbelievers (see on Matt. 5:10–12; cf. 1 Peter 4:14).

8. *Your brethren.* Their wrong was not confined to their dealings with unbelievers; they behaved deceitfully and unjustly with one another in the church. Fraud and injustice are always wrong, no matter who commits these sins, but they appear particularly detestable when practiced among brethren in the church. The offense in such a case seems exaggerated, because it reveals an absence of love and respect for those who should be regarded with particular affection and esteem. A church member has lost his love for God and his brethren when he descends to acts of injustice and unkindness to his fellow believers in the church.

9. *Know ye not?* The form of the question in Greek expects a positive answer: “Surely you know.” Have you departed so far from the teaching of the gospel and the principles of righteousness that you do not realize that there is no place in the kingdom of God for anyone guilty of these things?

Unrighteous. The unjust who seek to benefit themselves at the expense of their brethren will not enter into God’s kingdom. Their greedy, grasping, selfish character is altogether out of harmony with the selfless, humble love that characterizes the inhabitants of Paradise.

Inherit. The heavenly kingdom is mentioned in several places as an inheritance (see Matt. 19:29; 25:34; Luke 10:25; 18:18; 1 Cor. 15:50; Eph. 1:11, 14; Heb. 11:9, 10). The unjust, or unrighteous, who are so anxious to obtain material possessions that they are willing to bring the church into disrepute by taking their brethren into civil courts, are told that by so doing they are depriving themselves of an eternal inheritance of far greater value than any earthly possessions.

The kingdom of God. This could be applied to either the kingdom of grace here and now or the kingdom of glory that is to be revealed when Jesus comes (see on Matt. 3:2; 4:17; 5:3). An unrighteous man is not a fit subject for either. Men must qualify for entrance into God’s kingdom of grace on this earth now if they are to be candidates for the kingdom of glory in the hereafter.

Be not deceived. Sin blinds its devotees so that often they do not seem to realize they are doing wrong, or if they do, their senses are so dulled and benumbed by indulgence in evil that they seem unaware of the danger that threatens them (see Jer. 17:9; Matt. 13:14, 15; 2 Cor. 3:14; 4:4). Familiarity with sin frequently causes men to lose sight of its real nature, and they are led to believe that they can live in transgression of the law of God and at the same time confidently expect to be saved. God has made it plain that there can be no compromise between sin and righteousness, and that whoever clings to sin must reap the reward of such shortsighted folly (see Prov. 14:9; Gal. 6:7, 8; MB 91, 92). The Corinthian believers could not cherish ill will toward their brethren to the extent of taking them to the courts of unbelievers, and still expect to be saved.

Neither fornicators. Verses 9, 10 present a list of vices that were common among the heathen people of Corinth. Fornication may be listed first because of the flagrant case of incest (ch. 5).

Idolaters. Idolatry is here classed with a group of sensual sins. Among heathen people licentiousness is usually connected with idol worship. Another reason for including idolatry in this list of fearsome sins of immorality may be suggested:

licentiousness centers in the sexual abuse of the human body, and those who practice it may be said to make an idol of the means by which their lust is gratified.

Adulterers. See on Matt. 5:27–32.

Effeminate. Gr. *malakoi*, meaning basically “soft of nature,” “delicate,” or “tender.” When used in connection with terms expressive of sensual vice as those found in v. 9, it designates homosexuals, more particularly those who yield themselves to be used for such immoral purposes.

Abusers of themselves among mankind. Gr. *arsenokoitai*, another term describing homosexuals.

The list of sins found in vs. 9, 10 includes most of the common sins of the flesh (see Gal. 5:19–21; Eph. 5:3–7). If a man persists in cherishing any of these evil habits, he will be excluded from the kingdom of God. He who lives a life of slavery to the sins of the flesh not only forfeits his own chance of a share in the glorious inheritance of the saints but passes on to his offspring a legacy of weakness, both physical and spiritual (see 4T 30, 31; CD 118; 3SG 291; 1T 304).

10. Thieves. Gr. *kleptai* (see on John 10:1).

Revilers. Or, “slanderers.” See on ch. 5:11.

11. Some of you. Prior to conversion the Corinthians had indulged in the vices here mentioned.

Washed. That is, washed from sin. Baptism is the outward sign or recognition or ratification of the inward experience of removal of sin that has taken place in the repentant sinner. The washing mentioned in this verse is the miracle of regeneration experienced by the individual whose sins have been forgiven and washed away by the blood of Christ, in whose atoning sacrifice the sinner has placed his faith (see Matt. 26:28; Eph. 1:7; Heb. 9:14, 22; 1 John 1:7, 9; Rev. 1:5). Although a man may have been polluted and corrupted by the most debasing sins, he can find complete salvation in Jesus. When such a person repents and calls upon the Lord for deliverance, a mighty miracle is performed in his life, and he is transformed by the Holy Spirit into a grateful, humble, sincere follower of Christ (see Rom. 7:24, 25; 8:1–4, 11; 12:1, 2).

Sanctified. Gr. *hagiazō* (see on John 17:11, 17). The believers at Corinth had been called out of the world to serve God. They had been “washed” and made acceptable to the Father through faith in the cleansing blood of His Son. When sins have been forgiven, the Holy Spirit begins the work of developing in the converted believer a character like that of Christ. This process of sanctification is a continual growth in grace and the knowledge of God (see 1 Thess. 4:3; 2 Thess. 2:13; GC 469).

Justified. That is, reckoned as free from guilt, acquitted, held innocent (see on Rom. 4:8). This is the picture the repentant believer who has confessed his sins in the name of Christ, presents to God. Justification is possible because the faith of the believer is counted as righteousness (see on Rom. 3:24–26; 4:3, 5). The Father, looking upon the converted sinner, sees the beautiful garment of Christ’s righteousness with which the repentant one has been covered, and not the sin-stained rags of the sinner’s own corrupt life. This amazing transaction has been made possible by the sacrificial death of Jesus (see Rom. 5:19; 2 Cor. 5:17–19, 21; Heb. 9:15; 1 Peter 2:24; SC 62, 63). In view of the fact that the Holy Spirit works this transformation from sin to righteousness, believers are under moral obligation to live lives of continual surrender to the Lord’s will at all times.

12. All things. This expression must not be understood in its absolute sense. Moral evils such as those listed in vs. 9, 10 are certainly not included. Paul is referring to things that are not wrong in themselves. The Christian is at liberty to participate in everything that comes within the plan of life formed by God as that which is most beneficial for mankind. He may do anything that is in harmony with the will of God as it is set forth in His Word. God does not contradict Himself. What He commands in one place He does not set aside in another; what He forbids, no man is at liberty to do. Within the framework of all that is in harmony with the will of God, the individual Christian is free to do what he wishes, but there is one condition that must be observed: a believer is not to do anything that would cause someone to stumble. Jesus summarized all that is lawful for His followers to do, in His reply to the question asked by the lawyer (Matt. 22:36–40). Love to God and love to man are the principles that govern the life of the true Christian. He is at full liberty to do anything he wishes that will not in any way conflict with these two guiding principles. Compare 1 Cor. 10:23.

Lawful. Verse 12 has a play upon this word, and *exousiasthēsomai*, which is derived from it. The play can hardly be accurately conveyed to the English reader. The nearest approach to it is: “*all things are in my power*, but I shall not be brought under *the power* of any” (Vincent). This was apparently a proverbial saying.

Expedient. Gr. *sumpherō*, “to bring together,” hence, “to be profitable.” See on ch. 10:23. For examples of limitations to Christian liberty see on Rom. 14.

Power. Rather, “authority.”

Of any. That is, of anything. In the second half of the verse there is a repetition of the claim that the Christian is free to do all things, but another qualification is added that serves to limit this freedom. A wise man will not allow himself to be enslaved by that which he is at liberty to do. He will exercise self-control and be temperate in all things. He will not develop a habit that may gain control over his will or interfere in any way with his devotion to the service of God (see ch. 9:27). There are a number of things that the consecrated believer is at liberty to do, but it is not wise for him to engage in anything that would hinder the advancement of the work of God. Nothing must be done that will give offense to one who is seeking for the truth, even though the act may be perfectly innocent of itself (see Rom. 14:13; 1 Cor. 8:9; cf. 9T 215).

13. Meats. Gr. *brōmata*, “foods,” any kind of food, not necessarily flesh food, though this may be included. When the KJV was first published, the English word “meat” had this same meaning, “food,” and it is frequently used in this way in Scripture (see Gen. 1:29, 30; Ps. 42:3; Eze. 47:12; Dan. 4:12; Hab. 3:17; Matt. 9:10; 14:9; Luke 14:10; 1 Cor. 8:10; etc.). God provides food for man’s use, and He made man’s stomach for the digestion of food. Man has the right to satisfy his appetite for food. However, although God has given man the appetite for food and made provision for it to be satisfied, the Christian is not at liberty to eat whatever his appetite may desire, irrespective of quantity and quality. He is under obligation to remember that he is purchased by the blood of Christ, and it is his duty to keep his body in the best possible condition (see 1 Cor. 6:20; 1 Peter 1:18, 19; Rev. 5:9; CH 41).

Destroy. Literally, “bring to nought.” Believers will not give their chief consideration to that which is to be destroyed, but will prepare themselves for eternal life by the cultivation of a character that will meet with the approval of God. Temperance will be

practiced by those who are anxious to have clear minds and healthy bodies. Unlimited indulgence in eating, even of the best kinds of food, prevents one from enjoying good health, and also interferes with the understanding and appreciation of spiritual truth. He who is aware of the joy of communion with God will not permit his mental and spiritual faculties to be dulled by gluttonous gratification of the appetite for food (cf. ch. 9:27). Men ought to be thankful for the provision made by God to supply the body's needs for food. Hence, they should eat intelligently, in order to obtain strength to serve the Lord efficiently and to discharge their duties in this world.

Not for fornication. Although the stomach is designed and intended to be used for the digestion of food, the body is not designed for licentiousness. It is to be devoted to the Lord's service. The remaining portion of this chapter consists of an argument against immorality—an evil to which the Corinthians were specially exposed. No doubt the believers were conscious of the wickedness of licentiousness, but they lived among people who not only practiced it but considered it a part of their normal living (cf. Num. 25:1–8; Rev. 2:14). Hence the Scriptures present strong arguments against that vice. This instruction would, if heeded, (1) guard them against temptation, (2) enable them to oppose effectively those who defended it, and (3) settle the morality of the problem on an immovable basis. The argument presented in this epistle is as follows: Man was created in the image of God (Gen. 1:27), for His glory (see 1 Cor. 6:20; Rev. 4:11), to reflect the divine image (see Eph. 4:13; EW 71), and to demonstrate God's power (see 1 Peter 2:9; 4:14); therefore the Christian is under obligation to preserve his body undefiled, that it may be a fitting offering to present to the Lord (see Rom. 12:1). Apparently there were those who argued that there is a parallel between the use of food by the stomach and the use of the body for sensual indulgence. However, although the stomach is intended by God for taking care of food, and must have a regular supply in order to function, the body was not made for the gratification of sensual desires, but for the Lord (see 1 Cor. 6:15; Eph. 5:23, 29, 30). This is Paul's first of six arguments against impurity (see on 1 Cor. 6:14, 15, 18, 19).

14. Raised up the Lord. See Matt. 28:1–6.

Will also raise up. This verse presents the second argument against impurity (see on v. 13). By faith believers are united with Christ. God raised Him from the dead with a glorified body. The resurrected saints will have glorified bodies like His (see Phil. 3:21). Seeing that (1) the redeemed will be raised up by the power of God, (2) their bodies will be spotlessly pure and holy, like Christ's glorified body, (3) and this will be brought about by the power of God, it is not right that the body should be given over to purposes of moral pollution and gratification of lust. Indulgence in licentiousness is altogether unworthy of the saints, for they belong to the pure and holy Saviour, who has been raised from the dead and who has raised us up to walk in newness of life (see Rom. 6:1–13). It is similarly unworthy in view of the glorious truth that the bodies of the believers will be raised up to perfect and eternal purity. A full realization of their union with the spotlessly pure resurrected Saviour, and their own hope of immortal purity, should do more than anything else to keep them from the degrading sin of licentiousness in all its forms.

15. Members of Christ. The church is the body of Christ, and He is the head of the body, the individual believers being members of the body (see 1 Cor. 12:27; Eph. 1:22, 23; 4:12, 13, 15, 16; 5:30). The believers are as closely and vitally united with Christ as the hand or foot is with the physical body. As the members of the physical body are

controlled and guided in the performance of their respective functions by the head, so believers receive from Jesus, the spiritual head, guidance and strength to perform their Christian duties.

The third argument against licentiousness is given in this verse (cf. on vs. 13, 14). It is that Christians are united to Christ, and it is unthinkable to take the members of Christ and pollute them by immorality. Christ is wholly pure. His followers, being united to Him, are bound to be pure as He is, and those who hope to meet Him at His second advent will continually strive to preserve that purity (see 1 John 3:3). Could a true Christian put what belongs to Christ, and is a part of Him, one of His members, to such a vile use? Christians have been called with a high and holy calling, and cannot accept the low standards of the unbelieving world as a standard for their behavior (see Phil. 3:14; 1 Thess. 1:4; 2 Tim. 1:9; Heb. 3:1). The believer is baptized “into Christ” (Gal. 3:27), and becomes a member of Christ, and is required to preserve that sacred relationship, keeping all his body consecrated to the Lord.

God forbid. See on Rom. 3:4, 31. This expression forcibly voices the hope that something suggested by a previous statement will never happen. The phrase is found 15 times in the NT, and 14 of these are in the writings of Paul. In this verse the phrase shows the apostle’s abhorrence of the very thought that members of Christ should be severed from Him and become “members of an harlot.”

16. Joined. In marriage a man and his wife are one in a lawful, holy union (Gen. 2:24), but in fornication a man and woman become one in an unlawful, unholy union. Only when it is according to God’s law can the union of the sexes be holy. The Corinthian believers would not question the statement that they were members of Christ, but they might doubt that by an act of fornication they would lose their high estate and become members of a harlot. They might be inclined to say that this would be an exaggeration of the effect of a moral lapse. Paul’s reasoning, based on Scripture, could not be successfully challenged.

17. Unto the Lord. Verses 16, 17 are in direct contrast to each other. They set forth two directly opposed conditions that are wholly incompatible with each other. He who loves and trusts the Lord seeks to unite himself with Him in every way possible. He actively rejects everything that displeases God, and accepts only that which is in harmony with His will. This joining of himself with Christ is a constant activity, one that becomes his all-absorbing interest. The act of fornication, whereby the body is joined to a harlot, is temporary. But the character is degraded by the act. Though the union is a physical one, it reduces the participants to the very lowest moral level. On the other hand, union with Christ lifts the believer to the highest moral and spiritual level. It is intended to be a lasting union in which the mind of Jesus becomes the mind of the believer, which is thus completely united with the will of God. He desires nothing more than to be the agent through which the will of God finds expression in human thought, word, and deed (see COL 3:12). This joining to the Lord, here described by Paul, is another way of defining righteousness by faith. It is a beautiful statement of the mysterious transformation that takes place when the sinner lifts his eyes to Christ and by faith lays hold of the promise found in Jer. 31:33, 34. Jesus described this union under the figure of a vine and its branches (see on John 15:1, 4, 5). The believer does not lose his identity and personality, but he joins himself to Christ in such a way that he thinks Christ’s thoughts with Him, and desires the things Christ desires and does the things Christ would do were He on

earth. This experience is further likened to the marriage union (see Eph. 5:22–33). The union between a man and a woman in marriage should be regarded as sacred and unchangeable. The union between Christ and the believer is more intimate, rich, pure, and complete than any earthly marriage could be.

18. Flee. The Greek indicates a habitual, continuous attitude and action. That is, make it a habit to flee. Do not stop to parley with the tempter when he confronts you with any kind of invitation to indulge in immorality. It is dangerous to hesitate and argue with conscience; determined, immediate flight from the temptation is the only safe course to take (see CH 587). This injunction to make no attempt to stand and argue with the temptation to impurity but to turn and flee from it cannot be disregarded with impunity. The temptation to fornication may often prove so subtle that a person is safe only by fleeing from it. He is free from pollution only when he refuses to harbor an immoral thought; secure only when he turns his eyes away from any object that might suggest an impure thought (see 2 Sam. 11:2–4; Job 31:1; Prov. 6:23–26; Matt. 5:27–29). There is no other way to avoid the pollution of fornication than that stated by Paul, and no one is safe who refuses to follow this instruction. Joseph demonstrated the importance of flight from this evil thing (see Gen. 39:7–12; 5T 596). Many individuals would be saved from tears, remorse, poverty, want, disease, and lifelong misery if only they would give heed to the words, “Flee fornication.”

Fornication. Gr. *porneia*, a general term for all forms of illicit sexual intercourse.

Without the body. The exact meaning of the contrast here set forth is not clear, but the general meaning is apparent. No sin defiles the body as does fornication. No sin has its origin in, and is within, the body in the same dreadful way that fornication is. Paul here presents the fourth argument against licentiousness (cf. on vs. 13, 14, 15). The more immediate effect of sins such as theft, falsehood, covetousness, is on the mind, but impurity directly affects the body itself. Although things like drunkenness and gluttony are sins done in and by the body, they are introduced from without the body. But in committing fornication the body is used as the direct agent of the crime. This abominable sin is peculiarly hateful because it interferes with the beautiful and symbolic unity of marriage. God intends that marriage shall be a lifelong union of one man with one woman that nothing shall break (see Gen. 2:23, 24; Rom. 7:2, 3), which union represents the one between Christ and His church (see Eph. 5:25–32). See on Matt. 5:28–32; 19:5–9.

19. Temple. Gr. *naos* (see on ch. 3:16). This is the fifth argument against immorality (cf. on ch. 6:13, 14, 15, 18). Since the bodies of the believers are sacred shrines of the Holy Spirit, they must not be polluted by this vice. Because they are the members of Christ (v. 15) and temples of the Holy Spirit, which is given to us by God (see John 14:16, 17), every sin that is committed against our bodies is a sin against our Maker and against the Holy Spirit.

Not your own. This is the sixth argument against the vice of fornication (cf. on vs. 13, 14, 15, 18, 19). Man does not belong to himself; he has no right to use his powers according to the wishes and prompting of his unconverted body. He is the property of God by creation and by redemption. Man is bound to live mentally, physically, and spiritually as God directs, to the glory of His name, and not to the gratification of fleshly desires. The converted man is, indeed, a willing slave of Jesus Christ (see on Rom. 1:1; 6:18), who lives only to please his Master.

20. Price. God evaluates the human race highly, as shown by the fact that He paid an infinite price for man's redemption. This fact reveals the importance of each individual human being. Jesus would have come to the earth and given His life for one sinner (see Matt. 18:12–14; 8T 73). Being thus purchased by God, the redeemed sinner is morally obligated to live for God only, to obey all His commands, and to “flee” from all forms of licentiousness (see 9T 104; GC 475).

In your body. Because men have been redeemed from eternal death, it is their duty to do all in their power to keep their bodies in the best condition, so that they may best glorify God by serving Him acceptably (see CH 40, 41, 73, 74). An understanding of physiology, anatomy, and the laws of health is necessary if the body is to be taken care of intelligently (see CH 38; FE 321; COL 348). Christ's followers will not permit bodily appetites and desires to control them. Instead, they will make their bodies servants to regenerated minds that are constantly guided by divine wisdom (see Rom. 6:13; 12:1; 1 Cor. 9:25, 27; AA 311; MH 130; CH 622).

Spirit. Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 10) the omission of the words, “and in your spirit, which are God's.” Paul's emphasis in this chapter is particularly on the consecration of the body.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

- 1–9AA 304
- 2, 3 GC 661
- 6 5T 242
- 7 AA 306
- 9, 10 AA 306; CS 26
- 10 GC 539; Te 291; 4T 30
- 11 DA 510; 6T 335
- 12 9T 215
- 13 CH 41, 586; MM 291
- 15 6T 369
- 17, 18 CH 587
- 19 CD 160; Ed 201; FE 426; MM 295; Te 216, 241; 3T 63
- 19, 20 AA 306, 566; CD 56, 166, 204; CG 448; CH 20, 40, 83, 121, 221, 586; CM 19; COL 348, 349; CS 72, 115; CT 494; CW 37; FE 367, 427, 461, 488; GC 475; MH 330; ML 125; MM 122, 276, 291; MYP 45, 68; PP 362; SL 26, 31; Te 61, 214, 245, 287; TM 320, 432; 1T 477, 550; 2T 70, 103, 352, 354, 475, 564; 3T 43, 372, 390; 4T 82, 119, 568, 596; 5T 115, 381, 571; 6T 369, 479; 7T 45, 64, 75; 8T 229; 9T 104
- 20 CH 38, 81, 84, 158, 316; COL 326; CT 159; FE 127, 261; Te 55; 1T 488, 619, 697; 2T 45, 65, 96, 364, 372, 374; 5T 220; 6T 277, 286; 7T 9; WM 309

CHAPTER 7

3

2 He treateth of marriage, 4 shewing it to be a remedy against fornication: 10 and that the bond thereof ought not lightly to be dissolved. 18, 20 Every man must be content with his

³Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment*. Commentary Reference Series (1 Co 4:1). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.

vocation. 25 *Virginity wherefore to be embraced.* 35 *And for what respects we may either marry, or abstain from marrying.*

1. *Things whereof ye wrote.* This verse begins a new section of the epistle, in which there is a discussion of certain questions that the Corinthian church had asked Paul. The letter containing these questions is not extant, and it is possible for us only to conjecture as to the range of its queries. It would be most helpful, for example, to know what, precisely, were the questions relating to marriage. The interpretation of the chapter depends in part upon the nature of the problem presented in the letter to him. It seems fitting that the topic of marriage should be dealt with first, in Paul's reply, in view of his earnest warning against fornication (chs. 5; 6). Then there were probably those in Corinth who wondered whether the rigid Jewish rules that made it obligatory for all, at least the men, to marry (see Mishnah *Yebamoth* 6. 6, Soncino ed. of the Talmud, vol. 1, p. 411), were applicable to Christians. Some in the church may have had no particular desire to marry, and may have asked Paul whether it would be acceptable for them to remain single. If this query was the background of Paul's statement in ch. 7:1, then the apostle was not giving general counsel regarding the propriety of marriage, but was simply informing this particular group that it was perfectly proper to remain single. Some Christians apparently believed that marriage was a sinful state, which ought to be avoided and if possible broken up. This would be an understandable reaction against the licentiousness that was so common in Corinth at that time. In their zeal to avoid anything in the nature of fornication they might swing over to the other extreme of complete abstention from the marriage relation.

Good. Gr. *kalos*, "proper," "appropriate." The word does not denote goodness in a moral sense (see vs. 28, 36). Hence this statement cannot be used to justify celibacy as a morally superior practice (see Matt. 19:4–6; Rom. 7:2–4; Eph. 5:22–32; 1 Tim. 4:1–3; Heb. 13:4). It would be inconsistent for Paul to teach that it is not good for men to marry under any circumstances, and then in an epistle to another church, use marriage as an illustration of the close union that exists between Christ and His church (see Eph. 5:22–27). See above under "things whereof ye wrote."

Touch a woman. A euphemism for sexual intercourse (see Gen. 20:4, 6; 26:11; Prov. 6:29). The expression here is probably synonymous with marriage. The instruction must be interpreted in the light of its context, and must not be understood as a prohibition of marriage.

2. *Nevertheless.* Though marriage is not required, it is wholly proper.

To avoid. Gr. *dia*, "because of," "on account of." These renderings of this word are preferred. Seeing that the condition of society in Corinth was such that immorality abounded, it was advisable for all Christians to be married. In whatever land the marriage tie has been lightly regarded, immorality has been common, and it will always be so. Purity and virtue are closely related to the preservation of the marriage vow. Paul's recommendation of marriage as a protection against fornication has been regarded by some as a low concept of marriage. But such persons fail to note that because of a particular situation in Corinth, Paul dealt only with the negative side of the matter. He does not say that he offers here the only reason for marriage. He does not deny the positive elements, and the blessings that marriage provides (see on Matt. 19:12). Neander says of this passage: "We must not overlook the fact that Paul is here not treating of

marriage in general, but only in its relation to the condition of things at Corinth, where he feared the effect of moral prejudices concerning celibacy" (Lange).

Fornication. Literally, "fornications." The plural doubtless refers to the many forms of sexual vice that were practiced in Corinth.

Own wife, ... own husband. This injunction emphasizes the Christian practice of monogamy.

3. Due benevolence. Literally, "the obligation," "that which is owed." This verse states the duty of husband and wife toward each other in the matter of conjugal rights, specifically in regard to sexual intercourse. Each is bound to the other for life, and in every possible way each is to show kindness and consideration for the other. Such counsel was necessary because some Christians evidently believed that there was special virtue in husband and wife living separately from each other, which at once denied them the legitimate privileges of the married condition and exposed them to the temptation to immorality.

4. Hath not power. The equal rights of husband and wife are here plainly stated. Neither party has the right to deny the other the intimate privileges of the marriage relation. This does not sanction any form of abuse or excess. On the contrary, Christians must recognize the need for temperance in everything (see ch. 9:25; 1T 618; 2T 380, 381, 474). Married persons should consider themselves as united in a most intimate union and with the most tender ties; therefore, when temptation to unfaithfulness comes to them, each should spontaneously think of the mystical and sacred union that unites him with his married partner and should positively refuse to break this union. Chrysostom expresses it thus: "When therefore thou seest an harlot tempting thee, say, 'My body is not mine, but my wife's.' The same also let the woman say to those who would undermine her chastity, 'My body is not mine, but my husband's'" (*Homilies* xix. 2, 1 Cor. 7:3; *NPNF*, 1st series, vol. 12, p. 105).

It should not be forgotten that this discussion of the duty and privileges of married people, in the intimate relations of marriage, developed from questions raised by the church at Corinth (see v. 1). As earlier stated, there probably were some believers who held ascetic views that led them to think that, even in the married state, they were obliged to abstain from sexual intercourse. This verse shows that the very nature of marriage implies that the granting or withholding of the marriage privilege should not be subject to the whim of either party. Each has a claim to conjugal rights; always, however, with the divine qualification that God is to be honored in all things (see ch. 10:31). Knowing that his body is a temple of the Holy Spirit (see ch. 6:19, 20), the believer will not permit the privilege granted him by marriage to become a cause for violation of the command to present his body without defect to the Lord (see Rom. 12:1; cf. 2T 380). The body must ever be kept under the control of sanctified reason.

5. Defraud. Gr. *apostereō*, "to rob," "to deprive of." The word occurs in the LXX of Ex. 21:10, where a man is counseled not to diminish the food, raiment, and duty of marriage due his first wife. Christians are told that they must not deprive one another of the intimate privileges of marriage, except for a limited time, under special circumstances and by mutual consent. The next statement introduces grounds for a mutual arrangement for temporary abstention from intimate relations, unhindered participation in special religious exercise, though not with any suggestion of promoting asceticism in married life. It cannot be concluded from this counsel that such refraining from the privileges of

marriage is necessary in order to engage in regular daily seasons of prayer, but only that it is an allowable plan to adopt when one feels the need of a period of specially intense devotion such as here suggested by the phrase, “fasting and prayer” (cf. Ex. 19:14, 15).

Fasting. Textual evidence attests (cf. p. 10) the omission of this word. For fasting among the Jews see on Mark 2:18.

Come together. Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 10) the reading “be together.” The reason for the mutually planned period of abstinence having ceased to exist, husband and wife should return to the normal conduct of married life. The reason for this admonition to resume normal relations is clearly stated, the avoidance of sexual misconduct. Marriage guards the purity of the race; hence any attempt to introduce lengthy abstention from intercourse between husband and wife would tend to remove the safeguard against fornication that is established by marriage (see PP 46).

6. This. It is impossible to determine how much this pronoun is intended to cover, whether only the suggestion in v. 5 or the entire instruction in vs. 1–5.

By permission. Gr. *suggnōmē*, “agreement,” “mutual opinion or judgment,” “concession.” He does not intend to give the impression that married persons are under obligation to practice varying periods of abstinence by mutual agreement. He simply explains that if they so desire, they are perfectly free to enter into such an arrangement; they are not commanded to do so. This expression does not require the conclusion that Paul was not inspired by the Holy Spirit when he gave the advice found in v. 5. If vs. 1–5 are under consideration here, then Paul is further saying that he is not making the matter of whether to get married, one of command. This is a matter for the individual to decide.

7. Even as I. That is, possessing a gift that makes marriage unnecessary (see Matt. 19:10–12). That Paul was previously married cannot be proved conclusively. According to Acts 26:10 Paul gave his voice against the saints, which has been interpreted to mean that he was a member of the Sanhedrin (cf. AA 112). Members of that body were required to be married (see Talmud *Sanhedrin* 36b, Soncino ed., vol. 1, p. 229; cf. DA 133). Furthermore, it is most natural to assume that Paul, as a strict Pharisee, would not have neglected what the Jews regarded as a sacred obligation, namely marriage (see Mishnah *Yebamoth* 6. 6, Soncino ed. of the Talmud, vol. 1, p. 411). His detailed counsel in this chapter suggests an intimate acquaintance with problems such as marriage would provide. There seems to be little doubt, therefore, that sometime prior to the writing of the First Epistle to the Corinthians, Paul had been married.

His proper gift. Recognition is here made of the fact that all men are not alike in this matter of marrying or not marrying. Some prefer to remain single, and have the ability to live a satisfactory life without marriage. Others prefer to follow the normal plan for life on this earth, and enter the married state. Both courses are approved by the Lord when carried out in harmony with His counsel.

8. Unmarried. The Greek is a masculine form, which may indicate that Paul is referring here only to bachelors and widowers. The unmarried maidens are mentioned in v. 25.

Widows. Women bereft of their husbands.

Good. Gr. *kalos* (see on v. 1).

Even as I. See on v. 7.

9. *Cannot contain.* Paul stresses the importance of being continent, but he also recognizes that all men are not like him (see on v. 7). Furthermore, those who have been accustomed to marriage may find it harder to maintain complete continence (see 1 Tim. 5:11, 14).

To burn. Paul advises those who have undue difficulty in keeping their sexual desires under control, to marry rather than be constantly subjected to the excitement of unsatisfied desire. The instruction here is plain and in harmony with the general tenor of the preceding verses, namely, the preservation of purity and the best attitude toward marriage (see vs. 2, 3, 5). Even when all the problems associated with married life during a period of persecution and distress are taken into account (see v. 26), it is better to marry than to be inwardly consumed with the mentally, emotionally, and physically disturbing condition of unsatisfied desire.

10. *The married.* That is, Christians already married.

The Lord. Paul reinforces his inspired command by referring to the plain teaching given by Christ Himself. Inasmuch as Jesus had spoken specifically on this subject the apostle could make such a reference. When there was no specific instruction from Jesus, the apostle gave fresh, inspired counsel (see on v. 12). The Saviour, declared that the marriage bond was sacred and unchangeable (see Matt. 5:31, 32; Mark 10:2–12; Luke 16:18). The command of Jesus leaves no room for the many excuses for legal separation that are accepted by the civil courts today, such as incompatibility, mental cruelty, and others of a more trivial nature. The Greek and Roman laws allowed separation of husband and wife for trifling reasons. The same was true also among the Jews (see on Matt. 5:32). This condition of society no doubt influenced the Christians to raise the question of the propriety of separation among believers. The answer is clearly stated; divorce is not in God's perfect plan for humanity. The only reason for which divorce is permitted is adultery (see on Matt. 19:9).

Wife depart. The prominence here given to the wife may be accounted for on the basis that there was a greater inclination for the wife to obtain a divorce. Being the weaker party, she was more liable to suffer oppression at the hands of an unbelieving companion. Or, perhaps, the letter of inquiry (see on v. 1) dealt with a particular case in which the woman was contemplating leaving her husband.

11. *If she depart.* Or, "if she separate herself." This statement is virtually an admission that the command given in the preceding verse would not be fully obeyed in the imperfect condition of the church. There would be cases of matrimonial differences that would not be overcome by affection and Christian forbearance, and separation would result. In such cases the rejected or separated wife should not marry another person, but she should seek reconciliation with her husband.

Put away. Gr. *aphiemi*, "to dismiss," "to put away," "to divorce." This is a stronger term than the one translated "depart" earlier in the verse, though perhaps here used synonymously. In v. 13 *aphiemi* is used of the wife. Jewish law recognized the right of the wife under certain circumstances to divorce her husband.

12. *Rest.* The duties of the unmarried persons in the church have been dealt with, particularly in connection with the question whether it is right and advisable for them to marry (see vs. 1–9). Similarly, the Lord's command regarding married believers has been clearly stated, also how they should relate themselves to the questions of separation and divorce (see vs. 10, 11). Now the discussion turns to cases in which one party is a

Christian and the other is not. The issue is raised: Would a voluntary separation be advisable and proper under such circumstances? The believing husband or wife might not desire to remain in intimate contact with a heathen companion. Counsel for such cases is given.

Not the Lord. Christ gave instruction about the unbreakable and sacred nature of the marriage tie (see Matt. 19:4–6, 9). Paul deals here with cases concerning which no explicit teaching was given by Jesus, hence the expression, “speak I, not the Lord.” He was moved by the Holy Spirit in giving the counsel that follows, but he did not base his words on any previously recorded statement that Jesus had made (cf. on 1 Cor. 7:10).

Put her away. There might be instances in which a non-Christian wife would be so antagonistic to the gospel, and so violent in her opposition, that she would not wish to live with her Christian husband. In such cases the husband could not prevent the separation. If, on the contrary, the unbelieving wife desired to remain with her believing husband, he is not at liberty to seek a separation. The marriage vow is sacred, and cannot be set aside by any change in the religious beliefs of either party. The only effect of the conversion of one party should be to make him or her more tender, kind, loving, and loyal than before. A marriage to an unbeliever is to be regarded as binding on a believer so long as the unbeliever does not voluntarily separate himself from his believing companion and enter into another marriage.

13. Not leave him. The counsel given in this verse is similar to that in v. 12, but it is applied to the other party to the marriage. In the same manner as the Christian husband is not at liberty to divorce his unbelieving wife merely on the ground of religious differences, so the Christian wife may not divorce her unbelieving husband for that reason.

14. Sanctified. Gr. *hagiazō*, “to make holy.” The background of this statement is doubtless the fear in the hearts of some believers whose companions were not Christians that defilement, or pollution, would result from remaining in the intimate relationship of marriage with unbelievers. Paul does not mean that the unbelieving husband or wife would become holy, or be converted to Christianity, merely by continuing to live in matrimony with a Christian, or that the unbeliever would gradually become favorably inclined toward Christianity by noticing its effect upon his companion. That point he discusses later (see on v. 16). He is here speaking of a condition that existed as soon as one party to a marriage became a Christian, not of something that would develop in the future. “Sanctified,” therefore, simply describes a status that does not defile. The unbelieving partner is sanctified in relation to the question of the propriety of Christians and heathen living together in marriage. If the marriage is legal, and is recognized as such by the church, the two are by the marriage tie one flesh and are indissolubly united (see Gen. 2:24; Matt. 19:5, 6; Eph. 5:31). This being the case, it is proper for them to live together. There is no need for a divorce.

Children unclean. That is, begotten of an unholy marriage, and thus in a sense illegitimate. If divorce were recommended on the ground that one spouse was a heathen, it would imply that such a marriage was improper. The Corinthians themselves did not believe that children of mixed marriages were illegitimate; therefore, even according to their own ideas, the marriage must be proper.

Now are they holy. That is, in the same way that the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the believing wife. They are hallowed in the sense that they are born of a hallowed union.

15. The unbelieving. The masculine is here used for both parties as is seen later in the verse.

Depart. Or, “separates himself.”

Is ... under bondage. Gr. *douloō*, “to enslave,” “to reduce to bondage.” If the non-Christian spouse does not wish to remain with the Christian one, and willfully deserts him (or her), the Christian is not to feel obligated to hold the marriage together at all costs. The unbelieving partner who wishes to leave his companion shall not be prevented from so doing. The Christian is under no obligation to attempt to live with a heathen companion against the will of the latter.

To peace. Literally, “in peace.” Let the Christian earnestly strive to live in harmony with the unbelieving companion without compromising principle (see Rom. 12:18; Heb. 12:14). Christianity is a religion of peace; it seeks to prevent or avoid strife and discord (see John 14:27; Rom. 14:19; 2 Cor. 13:11; Phil. 4:7). If peace cannot be had while the Christian and the non-Christian are living together in lawful marriage, and the unbeliever insists on departing, there should be agreement on a peaceful separation.

16. Save. The reason why the believing party to a marriage should not leave the other, or desire to be separated from the unbeliever, is that the non-Christian might be led to accept Christ as his Saviour by the example and influence of the believer. The conversion of the unbeliever would bring great happiness and blessing to the family as a whole and to the unbeliever in particular. This object is so important that the Christian should be willing to be patient and long-suffering in order to bring it about. He should never cease for one moment to live a true Christian life, no matter what provocation may arise to prompt him to do otherwise. There should be continual communion with God in prayer that the unbelieving companion may be won from unbelief to a life of peaceful, harmonious and happy preparation for the heavenly home.

17. God hath distributed. See on v. 7.

Walk. The acceptance of Christianity does not necessarily mean that there must be a change in the believer’s economic, social, or vocational status. The joyous news proclaimed by the messengers of the gospel in some cases produced great excitement among those who believed it, both Jews and Gentiles. The glimpse of the higher, happier, holier experience that it presented resulted in making certain ones indifferent to this world and its affairs. These sought to live for spiritual things only and tried to forsake their regular vocations (see 2 Thess. 3:6–12). The gospel does not seek to overthrow suddenly the existing order of things. Instead, it slowly penetrates into all the affairs of one’s life and brings about a change by a slow and orderly process. The teaching of this verse is aptly expressed by Neander: “Here we learn the general fact that Christianity does not disturb existing relations, so far as they are not sinful, but only aims to infuse into them a new spirit” (Lange).

18. Become uncircumcised. Circumcised Jews who become Christians are not to try to hide the fact that they are circumcised, as did certain Jews who forsook Judaism and became pagans (see Josephus *Antiquities* xii. 5. 1 [241]; 1 Macc. 1:15).

Be circumcised. The initiatory rite of circumcision practiced by Jews in accordance with God's command given to Abraham was not to be required of Gentile converts to Christianity (Acts 15:24–29).

19. Circumcision is nothing. Neither compliance with the Jewish rite of circumcision nor failure to do so could affect an individual's relationship with God through faith in Jesus. Emphasis is here placed upon the truth that outward ceremonies and observances are valueless without faith in Christ (see Gal. 5:6; 6:15). The newborn child of God is accepted by Him, not by reason of any works that he may perform, but because of his faith in the great work performed for him by Christ on the cross (see John 3:16; Rom. 4:5; Eph. 2:8, 9). Abraham, whose faith is spoken of as an example for all who believe in Christ, is called the father of all who exercise a similar faith in Jesus, whether or not they are circumcised (see Rom. 4:9, 11, 12).

But the keeping. Compare Gal. 5:6; 6:15. The idea is, what matters is the keeping of the commandments of God. God does not evaluate a man's religion by his compliance with ritual observances, but by his relationship to the principles of the divine law (see Eccl. 12:13; John. 14:15, 21, 23; 15:10; 1 John. 2:4–6). A man can keep the commandments whether or not he is circumcised.

20. Let every man abide. See on v. 24. Men are advised to continue in the condition or circumstances of life in which they are when they respond to the call of Jesus to serve Him. The acceptance of Christ and His way of life does not give one the authority to rebel against the existing order of things and to seek to escape from his environment or task unless there is a conflict between these and the principles of truth. Paul illustrates his point in v. 21.

21. Servant. Gr. *doulos*, “slave” (see on Rom. 1:1). Slaves who accepted the Saviour were not thereby released from their condition of slavery to earthly masters.

Care not for it. Do not allow it to be a cause of great anxiety and distress; do not consider it to be a disgrace. Do not permit your newly discovered spiritual freedom in Jesus to make you despise your situation as a physical slave, but learn to be content with the condition in which you were when you found the Saviour (see Phil. 4:11; 1 Tim. 6:6, 8; Heb. 13:5). The slave is instructed to do his duty to his earthly master, thereby witnessing to the transforming power of the gospel (see Eph. 6:5–8; Col. 3:22–24; 1 Tim. 6:1; Titus 2:9, 10; 1 Peter 2:18, 19). God cares for all His children, whatever their position in life may be, and He will give grace and strength to each one according to his needs and circumstances (see Phil. 4:19).

Use it rather. Two interpretations of the second half of this verse are given by commentators, depending on whether the clause “use it rather” refers to the use of freedom or to the use of slavery. According to the one interpretation, converted slaves were told not to be concerned about their social condition. Even if they might legitimately obtain their freedom, they should not be anxious to do so, but should remain in slavery, knowing that freedmen and slaves are all one in Christ (see 1 Cor. 12:13; Gal. 3:27, 28; Col. 3:11). Moreover, this present evil state is soon to be brought to an end by the second coming of Jesus (see 1 Cor. 7:26, 29), and then all believers who are now slaves will be made physically as well as spiritually free. The other interpretation presents the passage as an exhortation to the believing slave to avail himself of the offer of freedom if he has the opportunity to do so. This latter interpretation is in harmony with

Paul's counsel regarding mixed marriages (see v. 15). It is impossible to determine conclusively Paul's meaning.

22. Freeman. Rather, "freedman." The converted slave is, by his conversion, made free; that is, he is granted liberty from the bondage of sin by the Lord Jesus Christ. It seems that this argument is given in order to comfort the slave, who has been exhorted to be content with his lot and not to try to escape from it. The slavery of sin, which formerly held the slave in its awful grip, was much worse than the bodily slavery to an earthly master. But he has been delivered from the slavery of sin. Thus his condition, though still that of a slave, is much better than it was before; he is now truly a freedman, a man made free by the Lord. Others who have not experienced conversion, possibly the slavemaster himself, are in a much worse condition of bondage than the slave. The slave should rejoice, therefore, in deliverance from the greater evil. The greatest blessing that man can receive is freedom from sin; if he has that, he should not be unduly anxious concerning the external circumstances of this life (see Matt. 6:25–31, 33, 34; John 8:32, 34, 36; Rom. 7:14–20, 23, 24; 8:2; Gal. 5:1).

Servant. Gr. *doulos*, "bond servant," or "slave," as in v. 21 and in the first half of this verse. The free citizen who accepts Christ's invitation to follow Him, and who gives his heart to the Lord without reserve, thereby becomes the "bondslave" of Jesus. There is no such thing as absolute independence. Man is either the miserable slave of sin or the happy, willing bondslave of his Creator and Saviour. All civilized society is governed by laws. There is no degradation in being obedient to the accepted laws of the society in which one lives, provided always that those laws are in harmony with the Word of God. Daniel's three companions were ready to obey the Chaldean emperor's order to go out to the plain of Dura, where the great golden image had been erected, but they refused to bow down to it because that was contrary to the plain command of God (Dan. 3:14, 16–18; cf. Ex. 20:4, 5). Obedience to the law of God, whether as slave or freedman, is the highest form of reverence and the test of discipleship, as well as the highest dictate of reason and conscience (see 1 Cor. 7:19; CT 111; SC 60; MB 146, 147; AA 506). The apostle shows that the Christian slave and the freedman are on an equal plane, in that they are both required to live in obedience to the law of God.

23. Bought. The purchase price is the infinitely precious blood of Jesus (see John 3:16; Rom. 5:8, 18, 19; 1 Peter 1:18, 19; 1 Peter 3:18). Slaves who accept the gospel, although bound to human masters and deprived of civil liberty, are of incalculable value in the eyes of God. They are the bondslaves of Jesus Christ, and they can serve Him by continuing in submission to their earthly masters, because Christ will consider such service, if faithfully rendered, as done for Him (see Eph. 6:5–8; Col. 3:22–24).

Servants of men. Rather, "slaves of men." The meaning of the injunction "be not ye the servants of men" is not entirely clear in the present context. Some understand it as counsel for those who are free, or those who have been freed, not to become slaves. Others consider the injunction counsel to all Christians, whether bond or free, to be guided by the principles of truth while performing their duties according to their civil status in life. Under no circumstances will they transgress the law of God in order to comply with the requirements of men (see Acts 5:29). They will recognize that God, who has paid the price for their salvation, requires complete devotion and undivided allegiance (see Luke 10:27). They will permit no one to interfere with their rights and duty to worship God according to the dictates of their own conscience. The Holy Spirit is

the Christian's guide and teacher (see John 16:13; Rom. 8:14). The conscience is the Lord's, to be guided by Him, and not to be brought under the control of any man or body of men. The life belongs to God, to be ruled and used by Him according to His will. In all respects the Christian is the property of God (cf. COL 3:12). This transaction is, on God's side, a purchase, and on the believer's side, a willing, happy consecration. In this way God's ownership of believers through Christ is the guarantee of their deliverance from bondage to men in all that relates to the will and conscience, and the proof of the truth that the service of Christ is perfect freedom (see John 8:32, 36; Rom. 6:14, 18, 22).

24. *Therein abide.* This verse repeats the exhortation contained in v. 20. Why is this repetition made? Doubtless to emphasize the fact that Christianity does not seek to overturn or abolish any existing social order. The church of the living God is not placed in the world to disorganize human society, but, on the contrary, to bind it together. Christians may rightly consider that slavery is an evil practice and should not exist among civilized people. But it was permitted by God in His laws for ancient Israel (see Lev. 25:44–46; see on Deut. 14:26). His permission did not always indicate His approval. His permission in divorce was typical: “Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives” (Matt. 19:8). The Christian missionary to heathen lands does not try violently to overthrow established customs and practices when he sees that they are contrary to the teachings of Jesus. He knows that such a course would not advance the cause of truth, but would close the avenue to further missionary effort. The faithful proclamation of the gospel, attended by the power of the Holy Spirit, will work a reformation in the lives of all who accept it, and then there will be seen a change in the social system that will bring it into harmony with truth.

The instruction in this verse should not be looked upon as forbidding the Christian to seek to be delivered from slavery, if he can do so lawfully. It does suggest that he be content to wait for the Lord to guide him in the matter. If the Lord does not see fit to open the way to freedom, then the believing slave should be content to serve the Lord where he is. He is to remember that he can serve God effectually while he is serving his earthly master (see 1 Cor. 7:22). He must not bring scandal to the church by creating the impression among unbelievers that the spirit of Christianity is one of insubordination. All may live out the faith of Jesus at all times, witnessing for Him before all with whom they come in contact, and in that way spreading the knowledge of truth (see SC 81, 82).

With God. The glorious thing about the religion of Jesus Christ is that the believer is not left to walk life's journey alone. He is accepted into the family of God while here on earth, and has the companionship of heavenly angels and of the Lord Himself (see Matt. 28:20; John 14:16–18, 21; 15:7). Whatever experiences he may be called upon to pass through, he has the comforting knowledge that he is not alone; there is One with him who knows and understands all the problems and heartaches. To all who love and trust Him, the assurance is given that even in the most perplexing situations they will not be left without help (see Isa. 43:2; Heb. 13:5). When the believer realizes this, he will be content to remain in the place assigned to him in life, whatever that may be. When, as a result of fellowship with Jesus, the believer learns to regard his work as primarily that of doing the Lord's will, and all his possessions as means for more effectively serving Him, then he will enjoy peace of mind and satisfaction that is not known by unbelievers (see Isa. 26:3; John 14:27).

25. Concerning virgins. Paul now deals with another question concerning which the Corinthians had evidently sought his advice (see on v. 1).

No commandment. The apostle has no direct previous statement from Scripture or from the teachings of Jesus for his authority in regard to what he is about to say on the subject of the unmarried. For his counsel to the “married” he cited the command given by Christ Himself (see on v. 10). This fact does not in any way lessen the force of, or remove the inspiration from, the instruction that follows on this subject.

Faithful. Paul thus expresses his authority for the opinion that he is about to give. His conversion and consecration had been accepted, and the Lord had honored him with special enlightenment. He had devoted his life to the one object of honoring God and doing His will. He was constantly seeking to reach perfection in Christ (see Phil. 3:13, 14). Because of this, it is certain that he would not give advice for any selfish or worldly consideration. What he wrote was to be accepted as the will of God concerning the matter under discussion.

26. I suppose. Or, “I think.”

For. Rather, “because of.”

Present. Or, “at hand.” The word thus translated is used in 2 Thess. 2:2 for the second coming of Christ not being “at hand.”

Distress. Gr. *anagkē*, meaning either “need” (ch. 7:37, translated “necessity”) or “distress” (1 Thess. 3:7; etc.). In Luke 21:23 *anagkē* is used of the distress to come upon the land in connection with the destruction of Jerusalem. Paul was doubtless referring to the imminence of a time of great trouble and perplexity for the Christian community.

Good. Gr. *kalos* (see on v. 1). In studying the counsel concerning marriage the believer should remember that in regulating his conduct it is necessary to give thought, not only to that which is lawful, but also to that which is expedient (see chs. 6:12; 10:23).

Man. Gr. *anthrōpos*, generic man, either man or woman.

So to be. This phrase may be understood in two ways: (1) As counsel to remain as they were. Compare the advice relative to changing employment on accepting Christ (see vs. 17, 18, 20, 24). (2) As referring to what follows; that is to say, the believers are to be guided in matters relative to the unmarried by the instruction given in vs. 27–38. In view of impending calamities, the believers are advised to avoid entering into any condition that would increase their perplexity and distress.

27. Bound. Gr. *deō*, “to bind,” “to fasten.” Marriage is often spoken of today as a tie or bond, stressing the permanent nature of the union that is entered into when two people are married.

Loosed. That is, by separation or divorce. The apostle teaches that even in times of crisis or emergency there must be no neglect of the responsibility that falls upon married persons. They are required to continue in the marriage relation and to do their duty as married persons. Though they might find increased difficulties facing them in times of persecution and trial, they must not think of breaking the bond of duty in order to avoid inconvenience and suffering. They should do their duty, and trust in God to care for them.

Art thou loosed? That is, are you in a state of freedom from the marriage bond? The phrase applies to bachelors as well as to widowers.

Seek not a wife. To the widower or bachelor is given the advice not to be anxious to enter the married state (cf. on v. 1). This verse does not teach that Paul disapproved of marriage or that he declared it to be unlawful (as some of the Corinthian believers probably thought, see on v. 28). He was seeking, rather, to save Christians from unnecessary involvements in times of emergency (see on v. 26). It is true that the unmarried have an easier time in periods of distress.

28. Thou hast not sinned. The matter of marriage is left to each individual to decide for himself, according to his own inclination and need. The advice Paul gives in this chapter is intended to be a safe guide to all who face the question of marriage, particularly under adverse circumstances. But when all has been said, the ultimate decision rests in the hands of each individual. Each may choose the course that suits his own particular situation, knowing that both marriage and the single state are acceptable to God. There are conditions when it seems unwise to marry. But celibacy is not urged upon anyone; it is to be entirely a matter of individual decision.

Trouble in the flesh. The cares of husband, wife, and children and other duties of married life produce special perplexity in times of persecution and tribulation (see Matt. 24:19; cf. Luke 23:28–30). The words “in the flesh” point to the earthly life with all its interests, here indicating particularly domestic life, with its many cares about food, clothing, and the protection of all family possessions. In the days of persecution to come upon the church some believers would be imprisoned, tortured, and put to death. Families would be divided and the members driven into exile for the sake of their faith. Under such circumstances, says Paul, it would be better to remain single.

I spare you. Rather, “I would spare you.” As to the meaning of this clause there is a difference of opinion among commentators. Two interpretations are given: (1) “I will not enlarge on these evils, in order to save you from the pain of hearing about them.” (2) “I am giving you this instruction in order to save you from these troubles.” The latter is the more probable.

29. Time. Gr. *kairos*, a specific point or period of time (see on Rom. 13:11). The Lord Himself urged believers to live in expectancy of His second coming and the end of the world (see Matt. 24:42, 44; 25:13; Mark 13:32–37). The teachings of Jesus and His apostles show that the great business of life is to prepare for a home in God’s kingdom of eternal glory (see Matt. 6:19–21, 33; 10:38, 39; Mark 10:21). The time in which this preparation can be made has always been presented as short (see on Rom. 13:11). For us today the investigative judgment is rapidly drawing to a close, and when it is finished it will be forever too late to obtain a fitness for heaven. Therefore all should make certain of their acceptance as candidates for the kingdom of glory (see Isa. 55:6, 7; Dan. 8:14; 9:24–27; Rom. 9:28; 2 Cor. 6:2; Heb. 3:13; 2 Peter 1:10; Rev. 22:10–12). All should live in such close communion with Heaven that no matter when the call comes to lay down the cares of this life, they will not be taken unawares (see Mark 13:35–37; Luke 18:1; 21:34–36; 1 Thess. 5:1–6, 17, 22, 23). The Christian who is awake to this tremendous fact that he should ever be ready to meet God, will not set his affections on things earthly. He will be constantly aware of the uncertainty of life and the temporary, transitory nature of this world, and will live in a state of continual readiness for the coming of the Lord (see Col. 3:1, 2).

It remaineth. In view of the shortness of time available for men to prepare for eternity—at best, the time is no longer than the short life span—Christians will not bind

themselves too strongly to earthly ties and possessions. They will not allow anything, not even family relationships, to interfere with their determination to be ready for heaven.

Had none. The foregoing argument leads to the conclusion that no other choice is left for those having wives but that they refuse to allow the married state to lead to forgetfulness of their obligation to be in touch with Heaven all the time. In other words, the cares, responsibilities, and pleasures of marriage are to be made secondary to the great objective of life, which is constant communion with the Lord and eager readiness for His coming. This verse emphasizes the truth that under all circumstances and at all times, love for God and obedience to His requirements are to have full priority in the life of the believer (see Deut. 6:5; 10:12; Eccl. 12:13; Matt. 22:37, 38). This verse is not to be understood as teaching any lack of affection or kindness in the marriage relation, or as contradicting Paul's specific instruction in the opening verses of this chapter.

30. Wept not. He whose mind is filled with the Holy Spirit will not be unduly affected by the experiences of this earthly life. Those who are afflicted will restrain their grief by the certain hope of the future life in glory. Faith in God and His promises will calm the troubled heart (see Isa. 26:3).

Rejoiced not. Those who are happy in their earthly possessions and blessings are warned against finding in them their chief happiness. The worldly successes and fame that fall to the lot of men are not to be regarded as grounds for excessive joy. Men are to keep in mind the undependability of all things earthly, realizing that their permanent happiness can never be found in devotion to any form of worldly achievement (see James 4:14; 1 Peter 4:2–4; 1 John 2:15–17). However, it is perfectly right that we should be grateful for the good things of life, and happy for all that our loving Father has provided for our use.

Possessed not. It is right to acquire property and to engage in trade; but all material wealth should be recognized as of uncertain duration, soon to be left behind. All that man has must be abandoned to others when he is called away by death (see Luke 12:20, 21). Moreover, the Lord is coming to take all His people away from this earth; hence, why should they set their affections on material possessions? (See Luke 12:15; Col. 3:2; 1 Thess. 4:16, 17; 1 John 2:15, 17.) Seeing that one day soon all things earthly will pass away, believers should concentrate their attention on laying up treasure in heaven (see Matt. 6:19–21).

31. Use. Gr. *chraomai*, “to make use of,” “to have dealings with.” As long as men remain in this fallen world it will be necessary to make use of the things that are in the world in order to provide for the necessities of life, such as food, clothing, and shelter. It is perfectly proper for men so to “use this world,” for it was made for such a purpose (see Gen. 1:26–31; Isa. 45:18).

Abusing. Gr. *katachraomai*, “to use to the full,” “to misuse.” However, at times *katachraomai* is not distinguished in meaning, or only slightly so, from *chraomai* (see above under “use”). If such is the case here, the passage may be translated, “And they that make use of the world, as if they made no use of it.” Christians are called on to be wise in their use of the things of this world, not exercising their freedom in the use of their Lord's goods for the purpose of gratifying selfish desires and glorifying men. They must be on guard lest they allow their interest in the things of this world to crowd out their interest in the things of the kingdom of God. They should let sanctified reason

guide, subordinating the selfish desires of the natural heart to the higher claims of their spiritual well-being (see Matt. 6:31–34; 13:22; Luke 21:34).

Fashion. Gr. *schēma*, “outward appearance,” “form,” here referring to the world in its present condition.

Passeth away. Inasmuch as the world in its present condition is to come to an end (see 2 Peter 3:10; 1 John 2:17; Rev. 21:1), it is folly to set one’s heart on the temporary things of life. Parents especially need to be on the alert so as to avoid being entrapped by Satan into devoting their time and energies to the task of acquiring wealth, while the mental improvement and moral culture of their children are being neglected.

32. Without carefulness. Gr. *amerimnoi*, “free from anxious care” (cf. on Matt. 6:25). The context of this passage shows that the counsel here given has specific reference to times of crisis or emergency, such as the persecution that attended profession of faith in Christ in the Roman Empire in the 1st century. It is not desirable, in such times, that Christians should do anything to increase the trouble and anxiety they must inevitably face; therefore it may be better for them to deny themselves the privilege of marrying. The married man is likely to have more material responsibilities than a single man. However, this does not necessarily mean that he cannot give himself as fully to the Lord as may one who is single. Indeed, when both parties to a marriage are wholly consecrated to God, the result will be increased devotion to God.

Belong to the Lord. That is, things pertaining to religion, spiritual matters, as contrasted with the affairs pertaining to this earthly life. The “unmarried” is not burdened by family responsibilities. His time and energy are not consumed in providing for the material needs of a family, particularly in days of trial and persecution. He is at liberty to give his undivided attention to the things that are connected with the advancement of the kingdom of God. Paul personally preferred such a course. Thus it is right for a man, if he so desires, to remain unmarried and give himself to the work of the Lord. But Paul has already made clear (vs. 2–9) that for the great majority marriage is better (see on Matt. 19:10–12). Celibacy is not in itself a condition of greater purity or honor than marriage. That fact needs to be kept clearly in mind in order to protect against a fallacious conclusion that some have reached in their study of this 7th chapter. Paul, who in some passages in this chapter might seem to picture the unmarried state as more honorable, elsewhere extols the values and the virtues of marriage and the Christian home (see Eph. 5:21–32; cf. Heb. 13:4).

33. Please his wife. This is proper. However, the married man, in his great desire to please his wife, might fail to carry out, as he should, his obvious religious duties (see 1T 4:36; 5T 362).

34. There is difference. Textual evidence is considerably divided (cf. p. 10) at this point. Punctuation is also uncertain. There are two principal readings: (1) that represented by the KJV, and (2) that represented by the RSV. The RSV connects the first clause of v. 34 with v. 33 thus: “But the married man is anxious about worldly affairs, how to please his wife, and his interests are divided. And the unmarried woman or girl is anxious about the affairs of the Lord, how to be holy in body and spirit.” No matter which reading is adopted, the general teaching remains the same, namely, that the unmarried condition, whether of man or woman, has the advantage of being less likely to be influenced by “present distress” (v. 26).

The unmarried woman. That which is true concerning the superiority of the single state in times of crisis is as applicable to the unmarried woman as it is to the single man.

Holy. It must not be inferred that married women, by virtue of their marriage, are less holy than those who are single (see on v. 32). It is not in purity and spirituality that the unmarried woman is said to have the advantage over the wife, but in freedom from the distracting responsibilities of married life.

Body. See on Rom. 12:1.

Married. Compare v. 33.

35. Profit. Paul now proceeds to assure the believers that all he has said so far in connection with marriage is for their own good. He has no desire or intention to urge upon them celibacy, even though he himself found the single state to be the best for the work he had been called by the Lord to do. There is no compulsion in the matter; let each one weigh carefully the counsel that has been given, and then make his own decision. The Christian should select the course that will present the fewest obstacles to complete devotion to the service of the Lord.

Snare. Gr. *brochos*, “a noose,” or “a slip knot.” There is no effort to ensure the conscience. Paul did not seek to restrain them from that which is lawful and which the good of society, in normal times, generally requires. There was no desire to prevent them from following a course that would contribute to their real happiness, but rather an effort to help them in a time of “distress” (v. 26) and persecution.

Comely. Gr. *euschēmōn*, “seemly,” “becoming.” Paul refers to that which contributes to decorum.

Without distraction. See on v. 32.

36. If any man. Commentators give two divergent interpretations of vs. 36–38. Some apply the passage to the father of a virgin daughter or to a guardian and his ward, whereas others apply it to a young man and his fiancée. This latter view is reflected in the translation that is found in the RSV.

In favor of the first view are the following: (1) The expression “his virgin” is an unusual term by which to designate a fiancée; (2) the expression “giveth ... in marriage” (*ekgamizō*; textual evidence favors [cf. p. 10] the reading *gamizō*) generally means “to give in marriage.” This would represent the action of a father and not that of a young man. Those who hold to this first view explain that the Greeks, in common with Orientals, believed that the father had absolute authority over his unmarried daughters, and the question of their marriage was one for him to decide. This is still the custom in many Oriental countries today. If a girl remained unmarried beyond a certain age, it was considered a disgrace to her and to her father. Hence the anxiety of Oriental fathers to find suitable partners for their daughters before they pass the “flower” of their age.

In favor of the second view, that the reference is to a young man and his fiancée, are the following: (1) The verb “let them marry” is without an expressed subject if the father and his daughter are the subject of the earlier part of the verse; (2) expressions such as “having no necessity,” “hath power over his own will” (v. 37) seem to describe a struggle more intense and of a different nature from that a father would experience in giving his daughter in marriage.

On the objection that *gamizō* (see above) means only “to give in marriage” and not “to marry,” it may be noted that Greek verbs ending in *-izō* often lose their distinctive causative meaning. Such may have been the case with *gamizō*, although elsewhere in the NT it clearly means “to give in marriage” (Mark 12:25; *ekgamizō* occurs in Matt. 22:30; 24:38; Luke 17:27, though in these latter texts textual evidence favors [cf. p. 10] the reading *gamizō*).

Some commentators who hold that a young man and his fiancée are under discussion explain the phrase “his virgin” in terms of the supposition that Paul is here referring to spiritual marriage, in which pious young men took to themselves virgins and lived with them in a spiritual union under vows of celibacy. For historical references to this custom see *Pastor of Hermas Similitude* ix. 11, Vision i. 1; Irenaeus *Against Heresies* i. 6. 3; Tertullian *On Fasting* 17; *On the Veiling of Virgins* 14. This interpretation must be rejected, for it makes Paul tacitly approve of a custom that is entirely unscriptural. The second view need not embrace more than the case of an engaged couple.

If she pass the flower of her age. The Greek may be translated either “if she be past the bloom of youth,” or “if he be past the bloom of youth.” If vs. 36 and 37 are strictly parallel, the translation “if he be past the bloom of youth” should be adopted so as to agree with the parallel clause “having no necessity” (v. 37).

Need so require. According to the first view, the counsel is in regard to the father, when it becomes apparent that it would be unwise to withhold his consent to the girl’s marriage, either for the reason indicated above or for any other valid reason. According to the second view, the counsel is in regard to the young man with strong passions (cf. on v. 9).

He will. Either the father or the young man (see above).

He sinneth not. See on vs. 9, 28.

Let them marry. If the suitor and his betrothed are the subject of this verse, this clause follows naturally; if the father and his virgin daughter are under discussion, then the subject of the clause is only implied (see above).

37. Nevertheless. This verse sets forth the opposite propositions from those set forth in v. 36, and finds its explanation in terms of that verse. The counsel in v. 36 was given “by permission, and not of commandment” (see v. 6). Whichever decision is reached and executed, whether in terms of v. 36 or v. 37, it will not be regarded by the Lord as breaking His law.

Well. Gr. *kalōs*, the adverb related to *kalos* and of the same meaning (see on v. 1).

38. So then. This verse sums up the discussion of vs. 36, 37. It is not wrong to give a daughter in marriage, or for a young man to marry his betrothed, nor is it sinful to remain unmarried.

Doeth better. That is, in the light of the “present distress” (see on v. 26).

39. Bound. Gr. *deō*, as in v. 27 (see comment there).

Her husband liveth. God intended that nothing but death bring about a separation between husband and wife (see on Matt. 19:5–9; cf. MB 63–65).

At liberty. There is no sin in a woman’s marrying a second time, provided she follows the Lord’s instruction in selecting a companion (see Gen. 2:24; Matt. 19:6; Rom. 7:1–3; Eph. 5:31).

In the Lord. Even after the death of her companion a woman is not at liberty to enter into a marriage with an unbeliever. Duty to God must supersede all other considerations, and no plan must be adopted in which God is not glorified (see 2 Cor. 6:14–16; 5T 110; MYP 456, 462). Among the reasons why Christians should not marry unbelievers are the following: (1) Association with an unbeliever, be he heathen or nominal Christian, would greatly interfere with the carrying out of the instructions to be “separate,” to be a “peculiar people,” and not to be “conformed to this world” (see 2 Cor. 6:17; 1 Peter 2:9; Rom. 12:2). (2) There could be no real sympathy and companionship with one whose philosophy of life, particularly in the most important things, is so directly opposed to true religion. (3) Living with one whose daily life showed a lack of respect for, and appreciation of, the true gospel of Jesus Christ might lead to the woman’s losing her piety and moving away from her simple faith in the message and standards of God for His people (see MYP 453, 454). Knowing that marriage between believers and unbelievers is one of the most successful ways of ruining the happiness and usefulness of individuals, Satan does his utmost to persuade people to turn away from safe advice and to follow the promptings of the unsanctified heart, thereby creating situations that may mean lifelong misery, and ultimately eternal loss (see 2T 248; 5T 363–365).

40. Happier. Gr. *makarios* (see on Matt. 5:3). In view of the times (see on 1 Cor. 7:26), even if a widow could be remarried to a believer, she would be wiser to remain single.

My judgment. See on vs. 10, 12.

Have the Spirit. There seems to be a reference here to certain leaders in the church at Corinth who believed they were inspired. The apostle asserts his belief that he, too, was under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. This statement is therefore a claim that his letters are to be received, not as the opinion of man, but as the divinely ordained wisdom of the living God. It was necessary that Paul should clearly set forth his claim to divine illumination. Thus only could he counteract the instruction given by false teachers at Corinth, and thus only could he lay down regulations for the government of the Corinthian believers that would fortify them against the special temptations to which they were exposed.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

23 2T 476

24 COL 27; SC 82

39 5T 363

CHAPTER 8

1 *To abstain from meats offered to idols.* 8, 9 *We must not abuse our Christian liberty, to the offence of our brethren: 11 but must bridle our knowledge with charity.*

1. Now as touching. This verse introduces another topic on which the Corinthian church had sought Paul’s advice, namely, the propriety of eating food that had been presented by heathen worshipers to their idols. When animals were sacrificed to the gods in the heathen temples, part of the animal was given to the officiating priests, who sold the meat. Some of this meat found its way into the public markets. Two questions were thus raised: Was it proper to buy such foods in the public markets and eat it, and was it right to eat such food when visiting in the home of a heathen friend? For the stand taken by the Jerusalem Council on meats sacrificed to idols see on Acts 15:20.

All have knowledge. Perhaps the Corinthians had boasted of this in their letter of inquiry (see on ch. 7:1). The believers in Corinth were aware of the true nature of idols, that they were of no importance (ch. 8:4).

Puffeth up. That is, leads to pride and to an exaggerated idea of one's own opinion, and to uncharitable acts toward others.

Charity. Gr. *agapē*, "love" in its highest form, not sensual or biological attraction, but love based on principle; love as a real interest in one's fellow man because of his value to God as a being for whom Christ died (see on Matt. 5:43). Such love "is not puffed up" (1 Cor. 13:4). It builds up rather than tears down; therefore it seeks constantly to do those things that will help others (see ch. 13). Knowledge alone is insufficient ground for Christian action. This had been demonstrated in the factions and strife found in the church as a result of their so-called wisdom (see chs. 1:11, 12; 3:3, 4).

Paul reminded them that it is not safe to rely on such a faulty guide as human wisdom. If the heart is not rightly related to God, knowledge or science alone fills a man with pride and swells him with vain confidence in his own powers. It often leads him away from genuine religion and confuses his mind (see ch. 1:20, 21). The solution of the question regarding meats offered to idols should not be based upon abstract knowledge alone, but upon the demands of real love for others. It will find its chief concern to be the consideration of what best contributes to the peace, purity, happiness, and salvation of one's fellow men. This love is the solution of every doctrinal, moral, and social problem.

2. Knoweth any thing. Paul here condemns the pride of one's intellectual attainments that leads to contempt and neglect of the interests of others who are less learned. He who is so proud of his knowledge that he disdains others and ignores their real interests demonstrates that he has not yet learned the first rudiments of true knowledge. The really learned man is humble, modest, and considerate of others. He is not puffed up, and does not overlook the happiness of others. If a man does not use his knowledge to contribute to the happiness or well-being of others, that proves that he is unaware of one of the fundamental purposes of knowledge, which is the benefit of mankind in general. As a miser hoards his wealth and fails to make a right use of it to bless and help others, so one who fails to recognize the responsibility that the acquirement of knowledge brings, tramples upon the interests of those around him. His knowledge will be used for his own benefit, regardless of the need of humanity in general. This has been seen repeatedly in the history of the world. Knowledge, like sunshine, is of no value unless shed abroad in the earth. Men should ever remember that it is God who gives them the ability to acquire knowledge, and it is their duty as His stewards to use it for the benefit of all (see Prov. 2:1–6; James 1:5). Full and really valuable knowledge is possessed only by those who know and practice love (see 1 Cor. 13:2). The teaching in this verse is that knowledge without feeling is nothing, because it leaves out of consideration the most necessary item, namely, the right application of that knowledge to the interests of one's fellow men.

3. Love God. Obedience to the first great commandment, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart," brings real wisdom to the believer (Matt. 22:37; cf. Prov. 1:7). Where such love exists, it is seen in disinterested love for one's neighbor (see 1 John 4:19–21).

Is known of him. That is, the man who loves God is known in a special sense by God. It may be argued that God knows all men; therefore why should Paul specify a certain class as being known by Him? But God holds close communion only with those

who love Him. He responds to their love by taking them into intimate fellowship with Himself, regarding them as special friends (see John 10:14; Gal. 4:9; 2 Tim. 2:19). On the other hand, God declares He knows not those people who do not love and obey Him (see Matt. 7:23).

4. Concerning. Paul has digressed from the main topic of discussion introduced in v. 1 to show that the problem could not be solved by knowledge alone, that something else was necessary, namely love (see vs. 1–3). Now the examination of the propriety of Christians using food that had been offered to idols is resumed.

Nothing. In the Greek this word is in the emphatic position, thus stressing the nothingness of the idol. The idol is only lifeless wood, stone, or metal, and has no real significance either in heaven or on the earth. It should be borne in mind that by the word “idol” is meant, not merely the image, but the idol god it is supposed to represent. Paul’s statement denies this idol god all reality. The belief that various deities dwell in the man-made idols is only a fantasy of the mind of the worshipers. One of the names given to heathen gods in the OT is *’elilim*, “nothings.”

But one. The Scriptures repeatedly stress the fundamental truth that there is only one God, the Creator and Father of all mankind (see Neh. 9:6; Isa. 43:10; 44:6, 8; Mal. 2:10; Mark 12:29, 30; 1 Cor. 8:6; Eph. 4:6).

5. Called gods. Heathen people believe in and worship many imaginary beings that they call gods, but they are really not gods; they do not even exist (see on v. 4). Lacking the inspired revelation of truth that the Christian possesses in the Bible, the heathen knows not that there is only one God, who is the Creator, and in his ignorance he attributes divine qualities to many things both imaginary and real. Heathen peoples deify the sun, moon, stars, fire, water, earth, certain animals and birds, as well as mythological beings such as Apollo, Jupiter, Venus, Bacchus, etc. Paul here states that although there are representations of things in heaven and on earth that the heathen call gods, they have no divine power. But because the Bible believer scorns the idea that these gods are real, he does not therefore hold that there are no supernatural beings who can affect human destiny. Satan and his angels have power to manifest themselves to men in various forms (see 2 Cor. 11:13–15). Through this power the devil is able to delude and enslave millions of people in the worship of false gods.

Gods ... lords. The heathen believed that heaven and earth were peopled with gods and lords of many different ranks and powers. But they were only imaginary deities.

6. To us. Whatever the heathen might do or think, Christians should know that there is only one God, and He alone has the right to rule over them. There is not one God who rules over a portion of the human family and others who govern other sections of the world’s population. One God created all things, and by virtue of this act He has power and authority over everything on the earth.

Father. This title brings out the contrast between the Christian and the heathen view. The Christian believer knows God as his loving, compassionate, and understanding Father. He created all men; He provides all things needful for their happy existence; He protects them as a father does his children; He pities them in their sorrows, helps them to endure their trials, and in every way reveals Himself as their loving friend (see Ps. 68:5; 103:13; Jer. 31:9). The heathen have no idea of God as a father, but only as a mighty being who has great power and who must be placated.

Of whom. See on Rom. 11:36.

In him. Gr. *eis auton*, “unto him.” God is the goal of our existence.

By whom. Or, “through whom.” Through the agency of the Son all things in our material universe have come into being (see John 1:1–3, 14; Col. 1:16, 17; Heb. 1:2). The heathen claimed that there were many rulers and lords of the universe, but the Christians said there was only one. Paul here sets forth the great truth that God, and God alone, brought “all things” into existence, and that He did this through the active agency of Jesus Christ, the Son, who is the second person of the Godhead.

By him. Or, “through him.” Not only are we created through the intermediate agency of the Lord Jesus Christ, we are redeemed from sin through Him. All things, both creation and salvation, and everything that is included in those terms, come out from the Father through the mediation of Christ the Son.

7. That knowledge. Although most of the Corinthian believers might, indeed, understand an idol to be nothing at all, and that there is only one God, it was difficult for some to throw off immediately all their former superstitions and moods.

With conscience. Textual evidence is divided (cf. p. 10) between this and the reading “according to habitual use,” or “from force of habit.” With the latter reading the passage may be translated, “But some, through being hitherto accustomed to idols” (RSV). There were some among the church members who could not regard food that had been sacrificed to idols as ordinary food, even though they no longer believed in the existence of idols. As a result of lifelong custom they could not completely dissociate themselves from the past. Partaking of such food placed them vividly in their former setting, a situation that was more than they could bear.

Being weak. The conscience was not sufficiently strong to enable such persons to overcome all their former prejudices and superstitious beliefs.

Defiled. It is defiled because it is violated. Whatsoever is done without a clear conscience is sin (see on Rom. 14:23).

8. Commendeth. Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 10) the reading “will not commend.” The favor of God is not obtained by the use of, nor by abstention from, food that has been offered to idols. God looks at the heart and takes note of the thoughts and motives that prompt men’s actions. God does not make His favor depend on unimportant things like the eating, or not eating, of food offered to idols. The worship that is acceptable to God does not center in such matters; it is more spiritual.

Are we the better. Literally, “do we abound,” that is, in credit. Important textual evidence may be cited (cf. p. 10) for reversing the order of the clauses, in which instance Paul takes up, first, the case of those who eat not.

Are we the worse. Literally, “do we lack,” or “do we come short,” that is, in credit. It is not by refusing to eat such food that believers increase their moral worth or excellence. Paul is here speaking of meat offered to idols, and his statement must not be stretched beyond the subject under consideration, as if no item of food or drink could affect our relationship with God. The principle would not apply in a case where food or drink is known to be harmful to the body, or in the case of foods strictly forbidden by God.

9. Take heed. Knowledge of the truth regarding the nothingness of the idol does not of itself constitute an unlimited excuse for the exercise of the privilege of pleasing oneself without regard for the influence of one’s acts upon others.

Lest. Care is to be taken that the conduct of some, who fully understand the subject, does not lead others, less intelligent in the matter, into a wrong course of action. This is a

general principle of Christian behavior, the practical outworking of the golden rule in things that are of minor importance.

Liberty. Gr. *exousia*, “right,” or “authority,” that is, to eat the meat offered to idols. It is often true that a Christian has the right or authority to do a certain thing, but that it is not wise, or considerate of others, to exercise that right (see on ch. 6:12; cf. ch. 10:23).

Stumblingblock. That is, anything that causes another to fall from the path of truth, and thereby commit sin. There was danger that those whose consciences were not troubled by the act of eating meat offered to idols might cause others to sin by awakening in them an inclination to indulge in conduct that conflicted with their conscientious scruples (see Matt. 18:6–9; Rom. 14:13, 20).

Weak. See on 1 Cor. 8:7; cf. on Rom. 14:1. The believer must always remember that he is his brother’s keeper. It is his duty so to live that no word or deed of his shall in any way make it more difficult for someone else to live in harmony with the will of God. Personal convenience and inclination must not be the first consideration; one must give thought to the effect of his acts upon others.

10. Sit at meat. That is, attend a banquet. Perhaps the occasion would be some official function, associated with which would be some meal within the precincts of the idol temple.

In the idol’s temple. Here is presented what might be regarded as an extreme case, although it is conceivable that those who have little thought for the influence of their actions on others might behave in a manner such as that described in this verse. The fact that Paul would use an example of this kind shows the laxity into which some of the Corinthian believers had fallen. One who had knowledge of the true nature of idolatry might be looked up to as an example of proper Christian behavior, and his actions might give sanction to others, less well established in the faith of Jesus, to indulge in the same act without the approval of their conscience (see on v. 7).

Emboldened. Gr. *oikodomeō*, literally, “to build up.” The word is perhaps used ironically. The group at Corinth who boasted of their Christian liberty probably contended that their course of action was building up the weak consciences of their brethren. Paul replies that instead of “building up,” they were destroying the weak (v. 11).

11. Weak brother. See on Rom. 14:1; 1 Cor. 8:9. The weak brother is the one who above all others should be treated with considerate patience and forbearance. He is a brother in the faith, one who is united to the Lord by the same tender family tie that unites those whose faith is stronger. He has a claim upon the love and tender helpfulness of all others in the church. Everything possible should be done to avoid endangering the spiritual interests of such a person.

Perish. See on Rom. 14:15. This fearful result shows the serious nature of the matter under discussion.

Christ died. This brings to view the strongest argument against the wrong use of liberty to do a certain thing when that exercise of liberty endangers the salvation of someone else. Nothing should be done that will render vain the shedding of the blood of Christ for a soul. The possibility of such is here presented, and that possibility should be enough to deter anyone from taking any action that might have this tendency. Surely the Christian who has a vivid sense of what the Saviour has done for him will not insist on

being so selfishly indifferent to the welfare of his brethren as to do anything that would lead the “weak” brother to violate his conscience.

12. Sin so. He who has the love of Jesus in his heart will not wish to use his liberty in such a way that his brethren are misled. On the contrary, he will be glad to deny himself privileges and pleasures if by so doing he can avoid giving offense to anyone. There is a fallacious idea entertained by some that every man has the right to do what he pleases irrespective of the effect of his conduct upon others, so long as he does nothing contrary to law (cf. Rom. 14:13, 16, 21; 1 Peter 2:15, 16). Strong Christians should be careful to avoid doing that which will offend weak believers, or lay a stumbling block in their path. By causing others to be wrongly influenced, one violates the law that instructs Christians to love their brethren and seek their welfare (see Matt. 22:39; John 15:12, 17; Rom. 13:10; Gal. 5:14; James 2:8).

Wound. Gr. *tuptō*, “to strike,” “to smite,” “to beat,” here, “to mistreat.”

Weak conscience. See on v. 7.

Against Christ. Christ identifies Himself with His people, including His weakest brethren. He informed Saul on the Damascus road that persecution of the saints was indeed persecution of Himself (Acts 9:5; cf. Matt. 25:40).

13. Meat. Gr. *brōma*, food in general; not only flesh, but all kinds of food.

Flesh. Gr. *kreas*, “flesh.” The word occurs only here and in Rom. 14:21. Flesh foods were particularly involved in sacrifices to idols. Paul was willing to do without food that he might lawfully have eaten, rather than lay a stumbling block in a weak brother’s way. Liberty is valuable, but the weakness of a fellow human being should induce believers to waive their liberty in his interest. Love for one’s neighbors is to be the guiding principle in such matters. Surely the gratification of one’s desires is of much less importance than the salvation of the weak brother who may stumble over one’s exercise of liberty. This principle is applicable to many phases of living, such as recreation, dress, music—in fact, it applies to life in general. The denial of self for the good of others is a prominent feature of the experience of a genuine follower of Jesus (see Matt. 16:24; John 3:30; Rom. 12:10; Rom. 14:7, 13, 15–17; Phil. 2:3, 4). This principle is the essence of the spirit of Jesus, in whose earthly life it was constantly manifest.

While the world standeth. Literally, “forever,” here meaning a lifetime (see on Matt. 25:41).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

5 FE 409; 9T 47

CHAPTER 9

4

1 *He sheweth his liberty, 7 and that the minister ought to live by the gospel: 15 yet that himself hath of his own accord abstained, 18 to be either chargeable unto them, 22 or offensive unto any, in matters indifferent. 24 Our life is like unto a race.*

1. Apostle. This chapter superficially considered may have the appearance of a digression from the main trend of thought dwelt upon in the preceding chapter. However,

⁴Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment*. Commentary Reference Series (1 Co 7:1). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.

it is a continuation of the theme of that chapter, especially of v. 13. Paul illustrates his willingness to forgo his rights for the sake of others, by showing what he has forgone of his rightful claims as an apostle. Furthermore, his claim to being an apostle had been challenged (v. 3). He proceeds to state the proofs of his apostleship. The statement of his right to be recognized as an apostle constitutes one of the most beautiful, elevated, and ennobling accounts to be found anywhere concerning the virtue of self-denial and the principles that ought to motivate the minister of the gospel. One who is filled with the spirit of Christ is willing to do anything and be anything in order to advance the interests of the kingdom of God.

Am I not free? Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 10) reversing the order of the first two questions. Placing the question “Am I not free?” first makes the connection between this verse and what has preceded it in ch. 8 more definite. It is as though Paul said: “I am asking you to give up your freedom, and to refrain from using it arbitrarily. I ask you to consider the spiritual condition of your weaker brethren, and to control your liberty accordingly. Am I not doing the same? I have certain privileges as an apostle of which I am not taking advantage, lest by so doing I should hinder some from making proper progress in the Christian path.” The construction of the questions in this verse shows that they all expect an affirmative answer.

Seen Jesus Christ. One objection to Paul’s claim to apostleship was that Paul had not been a companion of Christ while Christ was on earth. Jesus called the apostles His witnesses (see Acts 1:8). It is true that Paul had not been a companion of the Lord prior to His death, but he saw Him after His resurrection, and thus could claim inclusion in the company of the apostles (see Acts 9:3–5; see on 1 Cor. 15:8). It is worth noting that Paul frequently supported his claim to being an apostle by reference to his vision of the Lord (see Acts 22:14, 15; 26:16; 1 Cor. 15:8, 9).

My work. The apostle refers to the fact that the very ones who were raising objections to his being an apostle had been converted to the Lord under his ministry. He offers this as proof that Jesus recognized him as an apostle and blessed him in that work. It is unreasonable to think that God would so bless an impostor; therefore the establishment of the church at Corinth under Paul’s ministry was a witness to his apostleship. A minister may properly point to the blessing that attends his work of preaching the gospel as proof of the fact that he is called of God to the ministry of the Word (see Matt. 7:16, 20).

In the Lord. Paul admits that all that had been done by him had been accomplished by the power supplied by the Lord. He knew that of himself he could do nothing (cf. John 15:5). All his power and wisdom came from the Lord, who had called him to the apostolic office (Rom. 1:1; 1 Cor. 1:1; 1 Tim. 2:7; 2 Tim. 1:1; Titus 1:1). This complete submission to the will of God and intelligent acknowledgment of the inability of a man to do anything in his own strength, is the first and most important factor in the making of a successful minister of the gospel.

2. Unto others. That is, others not at Corinth, who had not been converted under Paul’s ministry. These might doubt that Paul had been sent of God to preach the gospel, but surely his brethren at Corinth could not entertain any such doubt. He had worked among them for a long time, and they had had abundant opportunity to become acquainted with him and to see how successful his efforts had been. They had more than sufficient evidence that he had been sent to do a great work for God.

Seal. That is, the certificate of authentication. Paul emphatically declares that the existence of the church members in Corinth, the very ones who were indulging in doubt about his right to be called an apostle, was absolute confirmation of his claim that he was an apostle. Their conversion could not have been brought about by man. It was the work of God. It was evidence that God was with His servant and had indeed sent him.

God uses His servants as a skilled artisan uses his tools. They are the means in His hands for accomplishing His purposes among men. As the carpenter uses various tools in the making of a piece of beautiful furniture, and the finished article is recognized as a product of his hand, so the Lord uses His workers on earth to fashion into trophies of His grace, men and women lost in sin. The carpenter knows his own tools and uses them skillfully; so the Lord knows His servants, and under His leadership they are empowered to win men for the kingdom. This success in winning men for the Lord indicates His acceptance of their service, and establishes their status as His witnesses.

3. Answer. Gr. *apologia*, “apology,” “defense.” This is a legal term that was applied to a speech in defense of one who was on trial (see Acts 25:16; Phil. 1:7, 17; 2 Tim. 4:16). Here the word means Paul’s answer to those who sat in judgment upon his claim that he was an apostle. Fully realizing that it was by divine power that he had laid the foundations of the Corinthian church, Paul pointed to the believers themselves as the seal, or solemn confirmation, of his apostleship, his defense against all opponents.

Examine. Gr. *anakrinō*, like *apologia*, a legal term applied to judges in courts, those who sit in judgment, and investigate and decide questions brought before them (see Luke 23:14; Acts 4:9; 24:8).

This. Commentators disagree as to whether the pronoun refers to what precedes (vs. 1, 2) or to what follows. Perhaps the lengthier discussion of the succeeding verses is more suitably introduced by this statement than the foregoing two verses are summarized by it. In that event, that which follows constitutes the defense that Paul presents to those who presumed to question his authority as an apostle. In vs. 4–6 he sets out the main objections that had been raised, and in the following verses shows that they are of no force.

4. Power. Gr. *exousia*, “right,” “authority.” Paul claims all the rights and privileges that any other apostle had.

To eat and to drink. It might be inferred from what has been written in ch. 8 that Paul was referring to his right to eat food offered to idols if he so desired, but the context does not support this view (see vs. 2, 3, 6, 7). He is dealing with the question of his right, as an apostle, to receive his support from the churches to which he ministered. Paul’s claim that he, in common with all other gospel workers who give their lives to the ministry of the Word of God, has the right to be maintained by the churches, is based on very reasonable foundations as he proceeds to show (vs. 7–14).

The argument that Paul appears to be answering is this: Paul and his associate, Barnabas, worked with their hands to provide for themselves (Acts 18:3, 6). Other religious preachers and teachers claimed their maintenance from those to whom they ministered. This being so, it might look as though Paul realized that he and Barnabas had no claim to support by the church members because they knew that they were not apostles! To this reasoning Paul replied that although he admittedly worked with his hands, the inference made from this fact was wrong. It was not because he had no right to

be supported, and not because he had no such claim, but because he knew that it would be for the spiritual good of the church for him not to enforce this claim.

5. A sister. That is, a Christian woman, one who is a member of the church (see Rom. 16:1; 1 Cor. 7:15; James 2:15).

Wife. The phrase “a sister, a wife” should probably be connected as follows: “a sister as wife.” Like her husband, such a person would have the right to be maintained by the church. Paul here seems to be saying: “Do we not have the right to take a wife, who is a fellow believer, and travel with her at your expense, as the other apostles do?” Some have thought that a “sister” did not refer to a wife, but to a female attendant, who could minister to the apostles’ needs in the same way that certain women ministered to Christ (see Luke 10:38–42). But the reference to Peter, who was married (see Matt. 8:14; Mark 1:30), shows that wives are referred to.

As other apostles. This indicates that it was the general practice for the apostles to be married. There may have been several reasons why the apostles were accompanied on their journeys by their wives. In Oriental countries it is not easy for men to have an audience with women for the purpose of instructing them in religion, but the wives of the apostles could easily make such contacts. Thus it would be a great advantage for the apostles to have their wives with them to help them along domestic lines, as well as to care for them in times of sickness and persecution. Paul preferred the unmarried state for his own work (see on ch. 7:7), and there are, indeed, cases where a man may be able to do more acceptable work when unencumbered with a family. But there is definitely no Biblical ground for the enforcement of celibacy upon the ministry.

Brethren of the Lord. See on Matt. 12:46. At the beginning of Christ’s ministry His brothers did not believe in Him (see on John 7:3–5). Apparently they changed their attitude later, and were numbered among the preachers of the gospel. It is also evident from this statement that they were married and took their wives with them, at least on some of their travels. See on Acts 1:14.

Cephas. That is, Peter (see on Matt. 4:18; 16:18; Mark 3:16; 1 Cor. 1:12). For the fact that Peter was married see Matt. 8:14; Mark 1:30. Seeing that the apostle Peter, by his own act, gave his approval to the marriage of the clergy, it is strange that the one who claims to be his successor should forbid the clergy to marry!

6. Barnabas. Barnabas was a landowner of the island of Cyprus, who united with the church in Jerusalem, sharing his wealth with the poorer believers (Acts 4:36, 37). Later he was sent to look after the growing interests in Antioch (Acts 11:22). Feeling the need of additional help, he secured the services of Paul (Acts 11:25, 26). Later he joined Paul on his First Missionary Journey (Acts 13:1–4). After that journey their partnership in the work was suspended when they disagreed over the question of taking John Mark with them on the second journey (see Acts 15:36–39). This is the first mention by Paul of Barnabas since their separation several years before this epistle to the Corinthians was written.

Power to forbear working. The form of the question in Greek suggests a strong affirmation that Paul and Barnabas had such power, or right, to refrain from working for their own support if they chose so to do. After his conversion Paul had but one desire in life, to witness for Christ and persuade men to accept Him as their Saviour (see 1 Cor. 9:16; 2 Cor. 5:11; Phil. 3:13, 14). He was constantly on the alert to avoid anything that might serve to prevent men from believing his message (see Rom. 9:1–3; 10:1; 14:16,

19–21; 1 Cor. 8:13; 9:22, 23). The heathen people were suspicious of strangers who came among them, so the apostle determined not to give them cause to accuse him of coming among them as a religious teacher in order to obtain his support from them.

Paul's missionary footsteps seem to have been dogged by some persons who were continually trying to give him trouble, destroy his authority, and hinder his work (see Acts 13:45, 50; 14:2, 19; 17:5; Gal. 2:4; 3:1; 5:12). These individuals were, in part, Jewish Christian teachers who believed that the law of Moses was binding upon Christians, and who tried to press their doctrine on the churches established by Paul and Barnabas, thus raising doubts regarding Paul. Apparently unable to find any real ground for complaint against him, they represented his refusal to accept his support from the Corinthian believers as evidence that he was not a true apostle of Christ. See on 2 Cor. 11:22.

The gospel minister, wherever he works, must be on guard at all times against the danger of doing or saying anything that might prove to be a cause of offense to those for whom he is working. This requires a willingness to abandon one's legitimate rights and privileges, if need be, for the good of others.

7. *Goeth a warfare.* Gr. *strateuō*, "to serve as a soldier," in times of either war or peace. The expression is used of military service in general. The soldier devotes his life to military service on behalf of his own people and land. It is his duty to guard the interests of those employing him as a soldier, even by giving his life if necessary. But the soldier rightfully expects those who enlist him to provide for all his needs, thus leaving him entirely free to devote his energies to the work entrusted to him. As it is right for the worldly soldier to receive his pay from those who employ him, so it is right for the minister of the gospel to look for support to those to whom he ministers. This is the first illustration.

Charges. Gr. *opsōnion*, "army rations," "stipend," "allowances," "wages." Anciently it was customary to pay soldiers partly in rations of meat, grain, or fruit. Soldiers did not expect to be obliged to secure their own food; that was the responsibility of those who enlisted them. In the same way the gospel worker should not be under the necessity of devoting his time and energy to obtaining his own food and other necessities.

Vineyard. The second illustration is taken from the realm of agriculture. The man who plants a vineyard does not expect that his labor will be in vain; he looks forward to enjoying the fruit of the vineyard. In the same way the minister gives his time, labor, and talents to the establishment of the church, which is God's vineyard, and it is right that he should receive his support from it (see Ps. 80:8, 9; Isa. 5:1–4; 27:2, 3).

Flock. The third illustration strengthens the point of the preceding two. Perhaps the figure of the church of God as a flock of sheep (John 10:7–9, 11; Heb. 13:20), and the minister as a shepherd (Eph. 4:11; here "pastors" means, literally, "shepherds"), was in Paul's mind in his choice of the illustration.

An important lesson that is taught by this divine plan for the support of the ministry should not be overlooked. The natural heart is extremely selfish; man is continually striving to accumulate material wealth. The arrangement whereby the church supports those who minister to it in spiritual things helps the members to overcome the natural tendency of the heart toward selfishness. It also provides a way to give practical expression to their appreciation of the efforts put forth on their behalf by the minister.

Even more important, it is a means of expressing their gratitude to God for His love and care for them, which is manifested through the services of His appointed ministers.

8. As a man. The form of the question in Greek expects a negative answer. Was this plan for the support of the ministry merely human opinion? There were probably those who argued this and who claimed that there was no scriptural support for the plan.

Saith not the law. The law of God, whether contained in the Ten Commandments or in the rules and regulations referred to as the law of Moses, was regarded with great respect by the Jews and by the Jewish part of the Christian church. When arguing with Jews, Paul was accustomed to prove his points from the OT. In v. 7 he had demonstrated by human reasoning that it is equitable that the church should support the ministers of the gospel. Now he proves from OT illustrations that the same principle was recognized and acted upon during the days of ancient Israel.

9. Law of Moses. For a definition of this law see on Luke 2:22; 24:44; Acts 15:5.

Muzzle. The quotation is from Deut. 25:4. This binding of the mouth of the ox was done either by passing straps around the mouth or by placing a small basket over the mouth, fastened by straps to the animal's horns, so that the ox could breathe without difficulty but could not eat. The law permitting the oxen to eat the grain as they walked round and round over it in order to thresh it showed God's consideration for domestic animals. It is generally regarded as a humane provision for working animals, but this verse suggests that there is a deeper meaning than mere kindness to animals.

Doth God. The form in which this question is expressed in the Greek calls for a negative answer. However, we must not conclude from this that Paul disallowed a literal interpretation of the verse. God does care for the oxen. Paul is emphasizing the fact that this humanitarian regulation that permitted the ox to eat of the grain that he was threshing contains a principle that has a universal application. Those who work have the right to be supported by the fruits of their toil (1 Cor. 9:7; 2 Thess. 3:10). This wise and just arrangement has been greatly perverted by man under the control of Satan. Millions of laborers have not received adequate compensation for their work. Their fair share of the fruits of their own efforts has not been given to them. God is aware of this gross injustice and has assured His faithful people that in His kingdom of eternal glory all will enjoy the fruits of their labor (see Isa. 65:21, 22).

10. Altogether. Gr. *pantōs*, "certainly," "assuredly," "at all events," "without a doubt." However, Paul does not deny the literal application of the law (see on v. 9). He is simply making such a wide application of the principle that in comparison with the extent of the application the literal interpretation is, as it were, insignificant.

Our sakes. Paul now makes definite application of this law to those who are called by God to proclaim the gospel. It might be asked, in what sense was this regulation given for the sake of the ministry? The reply shows that it is God's plan that all who honestly toil may rightfully hope for reward. Not that the reward is the great objective in the case of the gospel worker; he preaches because, like Paul, he cannot do otherwise (see v. 16). But the Lord demonstrates His kind consideration for His workers. Although the true minister of the gospel is under deep compulsion to labor for the salvation of his fellow men, he is not expected to do so without hope of compensation, in the form of both material support and future joy (see Jer. 20:9; 2 Cor. 1:14; 1 Thess. 2:19, 20).

Plow in hope. He who engages in tilling the soil should be inspired to put forth his utmost efforts. In order to accomplish this, he ought to have the justifiable hope and

expectation that his industry and diligence will be crowned with success. He should labor with the confident assurance that he will be permitted to enjoy the fruits of his labors. One who is obliged to work without this inspiring hope is greatly handicapped and is not likely to be able to put forth his maximum effort. How can one who has no assurance of receiving an adequate compensation manifest great interest in his labor? How can he be expected to devote himself unselfishly and untiringly to the task committed to him? How can his mind be free from anxiety as he considers the needs of his family? If such is the case with him who is engaged in the work of the world, is it not also true of him who labors in the Lord's vineyard?

Partaker of his hope. Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 10) the reading "in hope of sharing." God, in the plan of salvation, uses many instrumentalities for the accomplishment of His purposes. As in agriculture one man may prepare the soil and another reap the harvest, so in the great work of winning souls for the kingdom of God, the Holy Spirit may use one person to sow the gospel seed in the heart of a seeker after truth, and another to lead that person through the water of baptism into the church (see ch. 3:6, 7). Whatever part a worker may have in the conversion of a soul to Christ, he will share in the reward with all others whom the Lord has used in drawing that one to Himself (see Matt. 20:8–10; John 4:36–38; 1 Cor. 3:8, 14). Similarly, the worker who sows the seed of truth is entitled to material support as truly as the worker who at a later date has the privilege of establishing a church composed of those who were introduced to the gospel by the first laborer (see 2 Tim. 2:6).

11. Sown. The figure of sowing is employed in the Bible to denote the preaching of the gospel and the impartation of the high hopes and privileges that are offered through faith in Christ (see Matt. 13:3, 19–23; John 4:38). The appropriateness of this figure is seen when it is remembered that he who sows grain in a field scatters it all over the field. So the gospel minister preaches the Word of God to all sorts of people in every condition. He preaches to all who will listen, not knowing who will respond favorably and who will prove to be like the stony ground and the beaten path in the parable of the Sower (see Matt. 13:4, 5). It is his duty to sow the seed, leaving the Spirit of God to bring it to fruition (see Eccl. 11:6; Mark 4:26–28).

Spiritual things. The Christian worker imparts blessings of infinitely more value than the material support that he receives. He proclaims the gospel, with all its blessings and consolations. He acquaints people with God, with the plan of salvation and the hope of heaven. He guides men in the way of comfort and peace; under the leadership of the Holy Spirit he raises men from the degradation of idolatry and the worship of false gods to the joy of communion with the living God; in short he, as the ambassador of Christ, invites men to receive that knowledge that will bring to them eternal life (see John 17:3; 2 Cor. 5:20). He lays before men treasures of eternal value, in comparison with which all the riches of earth pale into insignificance (see Isa. 55:2; Matt. 13:44–46; Rev. 3:17, 18; 21:3, 4, 7; 22:14).

Great thing. The claim for material support appears strongly justified from the fact that the compensation to which the laborers are entitled involves something much inferior to that which they impart. Not only is it a very small thing for the Christian community to serve the minister in "carnal things"; it is their joyful duty, by which they may partially demonstrate their appreciation of what the Lord has done for them (see Rom. 15:27).

12. Others. This doubtless refers to other religious teachers in the church at Corinth. Perhaps Paul was thinking of some of those mentioned in chs. 1:10, 11; 3:3, the leaders of the various divisions in the church who possibly claimed the right to be supported by the church. They may have been the very ones who sought to prove that Paul was not an apostle because he did not, like them, exercise the authority to receive support from the church. But he showed that if others had the right to such support, his claim was much stronger. He was their original instructor; he had led them to the Lord and helped them to organize their church. He had labored longer and more arduously in teaching them and guiding them in spiritual things.

Power. Gr. *exousia*, “right,” “authority,” “privilege.”

Not used. In spite of the fact that Paul had a greater right to claim material support from the church, he had not pressed his right; he had chosen to forgo his privilege in this matter, and to work for his own support. He was very careful lest he should give any cause for offense; lest he should make it possible for someone to accuse him of having mercenary motives in going to Corinth and preaching the gospel (see Acts 18:3; 2 Cor. 11:7–9; 12:14). This is an illustration of Paul’s complete dedication to his lifework of saving souls for the kingdom of God (see 1 Cor. 9:22). His first and only consideration at all times was what should be done for the best interests of the people to whom he ministered. This selfless devotion to the cause of the Lord is characteristic of all who have caught the vision of Jesus, and who know by experience the meaning of being dead to sin but alive to God through Jesus Christ (see Acts 9:6; Gal. 2:20; 5:24–26).

Suffer. Paul’s determination to support himself led him to endure all kinds of hardships. He was willing to endure these if thereby the kingdom of God might be advanced.

Hinder. Paul was anxious that nothing he might do should in any way cause hindrance to the advancement of the work of preaching the gospel. It was not because he had any doubt concerning his right to full support, but because he believed that by denying himself this right he could do good for the cause of Christ and avoid certain evil consequences that might have come about if he had insisted on his just dues.

13. Know. Paul referred to the common knowledge among Jews, and those acquainted with them, that the priests were entitled to their support from the things of the Temple. The history of the Israelites has been recorded for the benefit of the Christian church, and the principles of church administration found in the ancient Temple service are worthy of careful study.

They which minister. Not only the priests but also the Levites worked in the Temple and looked after the sacred equipment of that holy building. They kept the Temple clean and prepared supplies for the sanctuary, such as oil and incense; they also provided the musicians for the Temple service (see Num. 1:50–53; 3:5–37; 4:1–33; 8:5–22; 1 Chron. 23:3–6, 24, 27–32).

Of the temple. God had given instructions through Moses that the priests and their assistants should not have any inheritance in the land of Palestine, but should derive their support entirely from the Temple (see Num. 18:20–24; 26:57, 62; Deut. 18:1–8). Being largely free from the responsibilities connected with the care of land and other property, the priests and Levites were able to devote their entire attention to the important work of the Temple. They had no cause to be troubled with the necessity of providing for their

temporal wants; God had made provision for that through the tithe and sacrificial offerings of the congregation.

At the altar. This phrase no doubt refers specifically to the priests, for it was their duty to offer the sacrifices on the altar. The Levites assisted in the preparation of the sacrifices and the care of the vessels and instruments that were used by the priests, but it was the prerogative of the priests alone to offer the sacrifice before the Lord and to place the incense on the golden altar before the veil (see Ex. 28:1–3; Num. 18:1–7).

With the altar. Part of the animals of certain sacrifices were reserved for the use of the priest. Thus the priest shared the sacrificial animal with the altar (see Lev. 6:16–18; 7:15, 16, 31–34; Num. 18:8–10; Deut. 18:1, 2).

14. Ordained. Gr. *diatassō*, “to arrange,” “to appoint,” “to give order.” God has arranged that in general His ministers on earth shall be relieved of the dual responsibility of preaching the gospel and providing for their own material needs. Jesus sent out His disciples into the towns and villages of Palestine and told them to make no provision for their physical needs—that was the responsibility of those among whom they labored (see Matt. 10:9, 10; Luke 10:7). God told the Israelites that one tenth of all their possessions was His and they were duty bound to pay a faithful tithe to the priests in the Temple (see Lev. 27:30, 32; Num. 18:21; Mal. 3:10, 11; Heb. 7:5). Jesus endorsed this plan when He was on earth (see Matt. 23:23). Thus the pattern has been clearly laid down for the divinely ordained method that the Christian church is to follow for the material support of the ministry. Israel of old departed from the plain instructions of God in this matter, and they were cursed (see Mal. 3:8, 9). Failure to pay God that which is His exposes the professed Christian to the same curse that was pronounced on Israel, whereas loving, willing compliance with this just and equitable requirement qualifies the believer to claim the wonderful promise that is given to the obedient tithepayer (see Mal. 3:10–12). Man is by nature extremely selfish. He naturally follows the example of the great adversary of truth who lost his exalted position in heaven by cultivating the desire to exalt self (see Isa. 14:12–15; Jer. 17:9).

Tithe paying and the giving of offerings provide a continual check against man’s selfishness, in addition to helping him to place his reliance on God and not on material things of this world (see Matt. 6:19–21). So it becomes apparent that tithe paying and the giving of offerings for the support of the ministry and the advancement of the work of God throughout the earth bring blessings to both giver and receiver. Selfishness is checked, and interest is created and sustained in the work of the church. At the same time, those who have given themselves to the work of the ministry are adequately provided for without the burden and anxiety of trying to attend to secular matters as well as spiritual things.

Should live. If all church members are faithful in tithe paying and the giving of offerings, there will be an abundant supply of means for carrying forward the work of the gospel. More laborers can be employed and the coming of the Lord hastened. It is the duty of ministers to educate church members in this matter of church finance, in order that the believers may receive the blessings God has promised to those who comply with His plan in this matter, and also to promote the interests of the worldwide proclamation of the gospel (see 2 Cor. 8:4–8, 11, 12; 9:6–12; AA 345).

15. Used none. See on v. 12.

So done. Doubtless the Corinthians would have been willing to support Paul had he so desired. Paul is making sure that his present defense of his rights will not be misunderstood.

Better. The statement seems to be exaggerated, until we realize that Paul is not seeking personal glory, but the glory of God, as the succeeding verses show. The passage gives us another glimpse into Paul's wonderful consecration to the Lord and His cause, and emphasizes his complete negation of self in the interest of Him who had redeemed him. Man can do whatever he perceives to be the will of God, but if he does it unwillingly, with a resisting heart, he will not know the glorying that was Paul's. But he who cheerfully does more than is required, as did Paul in relation to the question of support, obtains a special reward.

16. For though. Literally, "for if." Paul's argument in vs. 16, 17 is difficult, and various interpretations have been given. Some supply the phrase "as others do" in the first part of v. 16, making the passage read, "For if I preach the gospel as others do [receiving pay from those to whom I preach], I have nothing to boast of." Others see the statement more generally as if Paul said, "Simply the fact that I preach the gospel is no basis of glorying for me, for necessity is laid upon me."

Nothing. Paul had suggested in v. 15 that he had grounds for glorying or boasting, but in this verse he makes it plain that there was nothing in the matter of his preaching the gospel that gave him any right to boast, because he was under compulsion to preach.

Necessity. Paul could not boast of that which he was compelled to do. All hope of reward must be connected with something that he did voluntarily, not under compulsion. That would show the real inclination and desire of his heart. By "necessity" he doubtless means his call to the ministry (see Acts 9:4–6, 17, 18; 13:2; 22:6–15, 21; 26:15–19), which he could not ignore and retain peace of mind or the favor of God.

If I preach not. Paul knew the penalty of silence. He knew that he was commissioned by God to proclaim the glad tidings of deliverance from sin, and that if he remained silent he would have no peace of mind, no happy, innocent communion with Christ. To remain silent would have meant denial of the charge given him by the Lord (see Acts 22:14, 15, 21; Rom. 11:13; 15:16; Eph. 3:7, 8).

All who are called of God to preach the gospel as ministers are unable to engage in any other line of activity and be happy or contented. If with a clear conscience and a peaceful mind a man can refrain from preaching, then he should on no account enter the ministry (see GW 437). The ministry of the gospel is the most responsible calling in the world, and only those who are willing to be guided by the Spirit of the Lord, and who respond to a sense of sacred duty, should enter it (see 3T 243). The true minister of Jesus Christ does not consider himself and his own convenience. He does not try to do as little as possible, or to limit his service to a certain number of hours each day; he is anxious to do more than appears necessary, because he loves the Lord and has an appreciation of the value of souls. He is impelled by an inward sense of urgency to seek and to save lost souls (see Jer. 20:9). What is true in connection with the ministry also applies to every follower of the Lord. Jesus has commissioned all who believe in Him to witness for Him (see Matt. 28:19, 20; Acts 1:8; DA 347, 348; 9T 19, 20). All who love the Saviour will respond to that commission by permitting the Holy Spirit to shine through them to all with whom they come in contact (see Dan. 12:3; Matt. 5:16; Phil. 2:15).

17. Willingly. Gr. *hekōn*, “eagerly,” “of one’s own instigation,” “of one’s own resolve.” Paul does not mean that he did his work grudgingly or unwillingly, but that his vocation was not the result of his own original planning for a life career (see on v. 16).

A reward. Paul’s meaning is not entirely clear. Perhaps the apostle means that if he were in the business of preaching the gospel as were other teachers he would receive a reward as they apparently do (v. 14). This is not the reward he sought (see on v. 18).

Against my will. Gr. *akōn*, in meaning opposite to *hekōn* (see above under “willingly”), hence, in the context, meaning not of his own resolve. He was called to the work when he had other plans in mind. Thus the fact that he was preaching the gospel was no ground for glorying.

Dispensation. Gr. *oikonomia*, “stewardship,” “commission.” Paul had been entrusted with a stewardship. In Paul’s day stewards were often slaves chosen from the domestic servants and charged with the care of the household goods (see Luke 12:42, 43). There is no idea here of degrading the Christian ministry to the level of a servile office. The word is used to illustrate the manner of Paul’s appointment as an apostle.

Paul did not mean that he preached the gospel for no other reason than that of mere compulsion, because he had the burden laid upon him, or in such a way that his will did not agree with what he was doing. Once having received his call, he gladly accepted his responsibility as a steward and determined to magnify his office. He saw fit to do this by denying himself the legitimate material compensation arranged by the Lord for ministers of the gospel (see Luke 10:7; 1 Cor. 9:13, 14). This meant that he would do without comforts and conveniences that he might lawfully enjoy, and that he would subject himself to hardship and toil for his own support while preaching the gospel. Behavior of this kind was a demonstration that his heart was in his work and that he really enjoyed and loved it.

18. Reward. A reason for Paul’s attitude in this regard may be found in his early antagonism toward Christ and His followers, his miraculous conversion (see Acts 7:58; 8:1, 3; 9:1–6), and the high responsibility entrusted to him (see 1 Cor. 15:8–10; Eph. 3:7, 8; 1 Tim. 1:15, 16). He was acutely conscious of the great wrong he had done in persecuting the followers of Jesus, even though he sincerely believed that by so doing he was carrying out God’s will (see 1 Tim. 1:13). The mercy by which Paul obtained forgiveness for his misguided opposition to the gospel is graphically illustrated in the words of Christ to the Father concerning the men who crucified Him (see Luke 23:34). Sincere repentance for wrongdoing enables God to pardon the repentant sinner (see Acts 2:37, 38; 3:19).

Paul recognized that the merciful treatment given him by the Lord and the great trust placed in him by the specific call to the apostolic office made him the recipient of favors of which he was utterly unworthy and could never repay (see 1 Tim. 1:11, 12, 14, 16). He gladly accepted the commission so graciously given him, and freely acknowledged his indebtedness to preach the gospel to all men (see Rom. 1:14, 15; 1 Cor. 9:16). Overwhelmed with grateful love for Jesus, he gave himself to the joyful task of taking the message of salvation to all, Jews and Gentiles. He felt urged to renounce the lawful provision made for his support (see vs. 13, 14). He did not wish to have his joy in the work interfered with by the acceptance of payment for that which was for him a labor of love. He was determined that his privilege of unselfish service should not be taken away

from him (v. 15). It was ample reward for Paul that he was considered by his Lord to be worthy of the high calling of the gospel ministry, and that he was permitted to demonstrate his unselfish love for the Saviour by laboring for souls at his own expense, without being a burden to the church.

Without charge. That is, without soliciting funds from his converts for his support.

Abuse. Gr. *katachraomai*, “to use up,” “to use to the full,” or simply, “to use,” as doubtless here, for Paul was not claiming or receiving partial support. The word need not be construed in a bad sense. Paul repeatedly asserted his authority to claim support from the believers (see vs. 4, 5, 11, 12), but he does not plan to exercise his right. To do so in his case would be a hindrance to the gospel and would deprive him of his coveted reward of offering salvation, without any kind of charge or fee, to all whom he addressed (see v. 12).

It cannot be argued from Paul’s statements in vs. 15–18 that ministers of the gospel should necessarily labor with their hands at some trade or other for their support and not expect the churches to provide for them. The apostle was careful to make plain that his own attitude was the exception rather than the rule (see vs. 5–7, 9). God has definitely instructed His church concerning His plan for the support of His ministers (see v. 14; AA 338–341).

Power in the gospel. That is, Paul’s authority or right when preaching the gospel to claim support from his converts.

19. *Free.* See on v. 1. Paul returns to his theme of ch. 8:9–13, that he will not permit his liberty to become a stumbling block to them that are weak. He proceeds to give further examples of forgoing his rights for the sake of others.

Made myself servant. Literally, “enslaved myself.” Paul was willing to labor for others, as a slave does without reward or pay, to advance their welfare. Like a slave, wishing to please his master, or because he is forced to do so, he was willing to comply with the habits, customs, and opinions of others as far as possible, without compromising principle. God’s ministers must be ready at all times to adapt themselves and their ministry to the nature of those for whom they labor (see 2T 673).

Gain the more. All things in Paul’s life were made subject to his great objective of preaching the gospel and winning souls for Christ. He was prepared to be of no account if by so doing some might be drawn to the Lord (see Rom. 9:3). The apostle’s laudable ambition was that he should be used by the Holy Spirit to lead the greatest number possible to accept salvation from sin through Christ. This is the ambition of every true minister of the gospel.

20. *As a Jew.* Here and in vs. 21, 22 Paul states in more detail the behavior that he referred to in v. 19. He had conducted himself in this way among all classes of people. He had done considerable preaching to the Jews, and his approach to them was from the point of view of one of themselves (see Acts 13:14, 17–35; 17:1–3; 28:17–20). Not only did Paul adapt his preaching to the Jews, he also appeared to conform to their customs when no matter of principle was involved (see Acts 16:3; 18:18; 21:21–26; 23:1–6). He was well versed in the ways of the Jews, being himself a former Pharisee and a member of the Sanhedrin (see Acts 23:6; 26:5; Phil. 3:5; AA 102). This knowledge of Judaism was put to good use by Paul, both in his evangelizing efforts among his countrymen and in his own defense (see Acts 23:6–9). He complied with their practices and prejudices as far as he could with a good conscience. He did not needlessly offend them, but

endeavored to use his familiarity with their beliefs and customs in a way that made it easier for him to present the gospel to them. His whole purpose in conforming to their philosophy of life as much as possible was to lead them to the Saviour.

As under the law. Commentators vary in their understanding of this expression. Some say that the first group named by Paul in this verse are the Jews as a nation; and those “under the law” are the Jews considered in relation to their religion. Others contend that “Jews” means those who are such by origin, that is, according to the flesh, and those “under the law” are Gentile proselytes to Judaism. Still others think that those “under the law” refers to the strict Jews, or Pharisees. Another explanation is that the two groups are identical, that Paul is using the literary device of parallelism for emphasis, and in preparation for the corresponding expression “them that are without law” (v. 21). Still another commentator suggests that it might refer to those who believed that salvation is earned by law keeping, such as those converts to Christianity from Judaism who felt that they were still obliged to comply with all the ritualistic observances of the Mosaic law in order to receive the approval of God (see Acts 15:1; 21:20–26). For the meaning of the expression “under the law” see on Rom. 6:14.

Paul did not unnecessarily violate the laws of the Jews. He did not chide them for respecting the law of Moses, nor did he refuse to conform to that law when he could do so without compromising principle. He was so careful about this that he could state, when charged by the Jewish leaders, that he had kept the laws and customs of the Jews (see Acts 25:8; 28:17).

Gain them. Paul did not believe that conformity with ceremonial laws and ritual observances was necessary for Christians, but he was anxious to do everything possible to create a favorable impression and so be in a better position to convince those “under the law” of the truth of the gospel (see Acts 15:24–29), and thus “gain” them.

21. Without law. That is, those who have no knowledge of the precepts of the law as had the Jews; in other words, Gentiles or heathen (see on Rom. 2:14).

To God. Lest he should be misjudged and accused of rejecting all law, the apostle stated parenthetically that in all his contacts with men, whether Jews or Gentiles, he was always conscious of his duty to God.

To Christ. Paul obeyed Christ and followed His instructions from the time of his conversion. He was bound to Him by ties of love, gratitude, and duty. The ruling purpose of his life was to yield willing and continual obedience to the will of the Saviour.

Gain them. Paul’s one desire, in his contacts with all men, was to win them to Christ.

22. Weak. Those whose understanding of the gospel was limited and who might be offended by things that were perfectly lawful in themselves (see on Rom. 14:1). In dealing with such, Paul did not deliberately behave in a manner that would arouse their prejudices and confuse their limited comprehension of truth. He did not shock them by nonconformity with their customs in dress, food, and even religious services (see Acts 16:1–3; Rom. 14:1–3, 13, 15, 19–21; 1 Cor. 8:13). This condescension to the viewpoint of the weaker brethren might have appeared to be weakness on the part of Paul, but it was in reality a sign that he possessed great moral strength. Secure in his experimental knowledge of the love of Jesus, and sure of the supremacy of the one great truth of salvation by faith in Christ, he could well afford to please the weak ones by complying with their peculiarities in things that were not of major importance, such as refraining from the use of food offered to idols (see ch. 8:4, 7–9).

All things. Paul's versatility enabled him to practice an all-sided adaptation of himself to all kinds and conditions of men in those things that were of themselves not matters involving questions of right principles. However, Paul never compromised on matters of principle.

By all means. Gr. *pantōs*, "surely," "definitely," "at least."

Save some. Everything that Paul did, his ready adaptation to the particular society in which he found himself and his willingness to be tolerant and patient toward all men, had but one objective—the saving of those who would believe his message. He did not express himself as planning to save all, because he knew that many would not believe (Rom. 9:27; 11:5). By his course of adjustment to the customs, habits, and opinions of all classes of men in order that he might save some, Paul followed closely the pattern set by the Saviour, of whom the prophet wrote: "A bruised reed shall he not break" (Isa. 42:1–3). Adaptability is one of the most useful qualities that a minister can cultivate. It helps him to work as Jesus worked: in the homes of the poor and ignorant, in the market place among merchants and financiers, at the feasts and entertainments of the wealthy, and in conversation with the wise. He will be willing to go anywhere and use whatever method is most suitable in order to win men for God's eternal kingdom of glory and peace (see MH 23–25; GW 118, 119).

23. Gospel's sake. This reveals the motivating principle that guided Paul in everything he did. He was so conscious of the reality of the love of Jesus, the verity of His resurrection power, and the truth of God's mercy to the repentant sinner that he was inspired with an undying passion to save men at all costs to himself. This is the experience of all who are regenerated by the Holy Spirit and come into intimate fellowship with Jesus (see Acts 1:8; 2:17, 18, 21; 4:13; SC 72, 73). Self disappears from the life of him who has fallen in love with the Saviour. He lives only to do the will of God (see Gal. 2:20).

Partaker thereof. This is the climax of the apostle's hope, that he might have the joy of sharing the reward of eternal life with those for whom he had labored and suffered. In this statement can be seen the same fervent love for his fellows that animated Moses, who did not wish to be saved if Israel would not be pardoned and restored to divine favor (Ex. 32:31, 32); and the unspeakable love of Jesus. Heaven would lose much of its joy without the presence of those for whom He died (John 14:3; 17:24; cf. MH 105).

24. Know ye not? In vs. 24–27 Paul uses the well-known athletic contests that were held periodically in Greece and in the Hellenistic world to illustrate the subject of his discussion, namely, the need for exercising self-denial to promote the salvation of others. In vs. 26, 27 he applies the lesson to himself. The Isthmian, or Corinthian, games were probably the ones to which Paul alluded, as the ones with which the inhabitants of Corinth were most familiar. The games consisted of contests in foot racing, boxing, wrestling, and throwing the discus. Paul alludes to two, foot racing (vs. 24, 25) and boxing (vs. 26, 27).

Race. Gr. *stadion*, "a racecourse."

Prize. Only one person could succeed in obtaining the victory in the games, yet all who entered were willing to undergo hardships and severe training in order to increase their chance of securing the prize. The prize given to the victor consisted of a wreath of pine, laurel, olive, parsley, or apple leaves.

So run. All who entered the Greek races put forth their best efforts to win the prize. They used all the skill and stamina they had acquired as a result of their intensive training. None of them was indifferent, lethargic, or careless. The crown of life eternal is offered to all, but only those who subject themselves to strict training will obtain the prize. This means that at all times the Christian will be guided in word, thought, and deed by the high standards found in the Bible, and will not be controlled by the desires and inclinations of his own heart. He will ask at every step of the journey: "What would Jesus do? Will this course of action, this plan of work, or this form of recreation increase my spiritual strength or lessen it?" Everything that in any way interferes with spiritual progress must be rejected; otherwise victory is not possible (see Heb. 12:1, 2).

25. Striveth for the mastery. Gr. *agōnizomai*, "to fight," "to contend," "to struggle," "to strive." Our English word "agonize" comes from *agōnizomai*. See on Luke 13:24. Contesting for the victory in the Grecian games meant more than the making of a spasmodic effort; it was a struggle from start to finish, without any relaxation along the way.

Is temperate. Gr. *egkrateuomai*, "to exercise self-control." To have any hope of victory in the games, an athletic competitor must be able to control his desires and appetites. More than this he must be able to make his body respond immediately to the commands of his mind, and must be able to defeat the natural indolence and disinclination to work that so frequently trouble humanity. He must abstain from all that would stimulate, excite, and ultimately enfeeble, such as wine, exciting and luxurious living, and licentious indulgences. He must gain self-control in all things, not only in those that were definitely harmful, but in the use of things not harmful of themselves. He must take all food and drink in strict moderation, and anything that could possibly weaken the body he must entirely reject.

The Christian who is striving to secure the prize of eternal life must follow a program that resembles in some respects that of the contestant in the Greek games. Courage, faith, perseverance, self-denial, and industry are as necessary for him who seeks to be accounted worthy to stand before the Lord at the last, as they are for the athletes who compete for earthly honors that are of a brief duration (cf. Matt. 24:13; Luke 13:24; Phil. 3:13–15; 1 Tim. 6:12; 2 Tim. 2:4, 5; 4:7; Heb. 12:1–4; James 1:12; Rev. 2:10). In the Christian race every contestant who meets the training requirements may receive the prize (see Rev. 2:10; 22:17). Though eternal life is entirely a gift of God, it is given only to those who seek and strive for it with all their energy (see Rom. 2:7; Heb. 3:6, 14).

Crown. Gr. *stephanos*, "that which surrounds," or "that which encompasses," "a wreath," or "a chaplet," often consisting of leaves worn as a sign of victory or joy (see on v. 24).

Incorruptible. What an incalculable difference between the reward of the victor in the Greek games, and that of the victorious Christian! How eagerly men strive for temporary success, and to what lengths of bodily inconvenience and even suffering they are willing to go in order to be accounted great in the eyes of their fellow men! If they are willing to do this for a fading crown that soon passes away, how much more earnest and persevering should be the striving of believers for the never-fading crown of eternal life! Because of the entrance of sin into the world, the thoughts and ideas of men are perverted, and Satan has succeeded in leading men to transgress all the laws of health, so

that they generally live in such a way that they hasten their bodily degeneration by their habits of eating, drinking, dressing, sleeping, working, taking recreation, and thinking (see CH 18, 19).

God requires His people to be conscious of the need for reform in these things and to be active in practicing strict self-control in all that pertains to the preservation of health. Man is not at liberty to please himself in the matter of healthful living; he has been purchased by God, and is under obligation to do all in his power to follow the laws of health in order to maintain his body and mind in the best possible condition (see 1 Cor. 6:19, 20; 10:31). The Christian who is governed by love for the Saviour will not allow his appetites and passions to control him, but will in all things accept the counsel God has given for his mental, physical, and spiritual living. The appetites of the body must be subject to the higher power of the mind, which is itself under the guidance of the Holy Spirit (see Rom. 6:12; 2T 380, 381). The poisons of alcohol and tobacco are glaring exhibits of the things that Satan has beguiled man into using, thereby increasing his feebleness, both physically and spiritually, and preventing him from qualifying for the eternal reward offered to all who are willing to be temperate in all things (see Prov. 23:20, 21, 29–32; 1 Cor. 6:10; CH 125).

How can anyone who refuses to abandon lifelong habits of wrong indulgence, whatever form they may take, hope to be blessed by God and receive a welcome into the kingdom of His glory? The only safe course is to remember that the body must be kept in subjection in all things all the time until Jesus comes (see Ps. 51:5; Rom. 7:18, 23, 24; 8:13, 23; 1 Cor. 9:27; Phil. 3:20, 21; Col. 3:5, 6). The blessing of eternal life, which is likened to a crown (Rev. 2:10), will not be bestowed upon those who view this present life as a time for the indulgence of the appetites and passions and the gratification of every wish and desire of the unregenerate nature. God will give eternal life only to those who use this present life as an opportunity to gain the victory over everything that would interfere with mental, physical, and spiritual health, thus demonstrating their true love for, and obedience to, the Saviour, who endured so much for them (see James 1:12; 1 Peter 5:4; Rev. 2:10; 3:10, 11; 7:14–17).

26. Not as uncertainly. Paul knew exactly where he was going and what he was doing. He aimed to advance as rapidly as possible in the race of life. There was no haziness in his mind about the direction he must take. He ran with a clear and positive assurance of reaching the goal. He exerted himself to the utmost, lest he should fail to secure the crown, a crown, not of fading leaves, but of immortal life, peace, joy, and happiness in the kingdom of glory. The runner in the Greek games had no such certainty of reaching the goal and obtaining the prize. But Paul knew that he, and everyone who complied with the conditions, could be sure of success. When he was nearing the end of his course he gave expression to his absolute assurance that he would receive the crown along with all other victorious Christians (see 2 Tim. 4:7, 8).

Fight. Gr. *pukteuō*, “to fight with the fists,” “to box.” Fighting with the fists, or boxing, was one of the forms of entertainment in the ancient athletic contests. Paul here introduces a change of metaphor from that of a runner in the race to that of a pugilist in the boxing ring.

Beateh the air. A boxer might be regarded as beating the air when he practices without an opponent. Or his adversary might avoid his blow, and by so doing cause him to waste his effort on the air. Paul here shows clearly that he did not spare his adversary,

or permit him to escape his blows; nor did he waste his time in shadow fighting, because his adversary was ever present and must be dealt with decisively. He aimed every blow with certainty, directing it with his whole will and energy so that it effectively reached its mark. The corrupt desires of the flesh were to be suppressed and his whole being brought into captivity to God through Christ (see 2 Cor. 10:3–5).

Many Christians know that there is need to gain the victory over the desires and appetites that are in opposition to the will of God, but they are halfhearted in their efforts to subdue self. They make a pretense of fighting, but they do not really wish their blows to punish that which is part of themselves, because they fear the pain of such well-directed blows. They love their sinful nature too much to hurt it, and lack the strength of will to ignore the pleas of the flesh for mercy. It is not so with Paul. He genuinely wishes to show no mercy to his sinful flesh, his carnal nature. He is ashamed of it, hates it, and desires its death; therefore he discards all thoughts and feelings of pity or tenderness and aims his blows with all his strength and skill and with all his will (see Col. 3:5; CH 51). These words must not be interpreted as though, like the Gnostics (see pp. 54–58), Paul regarded the body itself as intrinsically and incurably evil. He sought mastery, not destruction, of his body.

27. Keep under. Gr. *hupōpiazō*, literally, “to strike under the eye,” “to give one a black eye.” The KJV rendering here misses the metaphor of the ancient boxing match or fist fight of the Greeks, which Paul used to illustrate graphically the fierce nature of the conflict that must be waged by every sincere Christian. The boxing gloves worn by the fighters were not gloves in the modern sense of the word; they were often made of oxhide bands, which were sometimes fortified with brass knuckles. *Hupōpiazō* vividly portrays the severity and harshness that genuine Christians exercise toward their sinful nature. It suggests the rigid discipline and self-denial that must be exercised in order that victory may be gained over all the corrupt passions of man’s evil tendencies.

Bring ... into subjection. Literally, “to lead into slavery,” hence, “to make a servant of.” Paul thus shows his steadfast purpose to gain absolute victory over all his evil inclinations and corrupt passions and propensities. There was no thought of halfway measures with him. He knew that it must be a fight to the finish, no matter what the cost in suffering and anguish for his earthly nature; that evil thing that was warring against his spiritual aspirations must die. This is a lesson that all must learn who hope to qualify for acceptance as citizens of heaven. The promptings and cravings of the natural appetites and passions must be destroyed. This is possible only when the will is surrendered to Christ (see Phil. 4:13; SC 43, 44, 60).

Any means. Paul did not intend to allow anything to hinder him from attaining to salvation; he was prepared to do anything God willed in order that he might be fitted for heaven. He knew that there was the constant danger of being deceived because of the deceitfulness of sin, and he was determined that nothing should be left undone on his part to ensure his success in obtaining the crown of life everlasting.

Preached to others. Paul may be continuing the metaphor of the games, referring here to himself as the herald who called forth the runners in the race. At the same time he is also a contestant.

Castaway. Gr. *adokimos*, “not standing the test,” “rejected after testing,” “unapproved.” As a herald Paul had announced the rules governing the games. As a

contestant also, he would be expected above all others to abide by the rules. Paul had been zealous in proclaiming to others the rules and regulations governing the contest for eternal life. Here he gives utterance to his determination to practice rigid control over his sinful nature, lest he suffer the fearful disgrace of being found wanting by the great Judge at the end of the race. Christian ministers, who hold before the world the rules pertaining to victory in the contest for eternal salvation, need to be most careful about their own spiritual condition lest they come short in some respect, and so fail to obtain that reward that they have spent their lives urging others to win. If all who are called to the ministry of the gospel were as faithful and steadfast in laboring for souls as Paul was, the revival and reformation for which the church longs would be greatly hastened and Christ would soon come.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

- 6 AA 346
- 7 AA 340; Ev 64; 1T 147; 8T 180
- 7-14AA 335
- 9 GW 450
- 13-184T 409
- 16 AA 361; EW 94, 100; 1T 131, 379, 448; 2T 552
- 17 6T 83
- 19 DA 550; 2T 674
- 19-22GW 117
- 22 ChS 116; ML 189; 2T 674; 3T 422; WM 64
- 24 AA 313; 9T 136
- 24, 25 CD 27; CH 565; Te 144; 4T 34
- 24-27AA 309; CT 256; GW 241; MH 129; 2T 46, 357; 6T 374
- 25 AA 311, 312; CD 29; CH 38, 100, 432, 449, 505, 575; CW 124; ML 82; MM 275; MYP 242; PP 562; Te 94, 101, 106, 139, 141, 156, 161, 175, 189, 201, 243; 1T 471, 487, 618; 2T 45, 68, 362, 374, 381; 3T 62, 162, 489, 491, 561; 4T 33, 215; 6T 256, 375, 378; 7T 74
- 25, 26 Te 145
- 25-27SL 26; 4T 35
- 26 TM 407
- 26, 27 AA 314; 2T 359
- 27 CD 44; CG 467; Ev 682; ML 78; MM 144; SL 95; Te 148; TM 163; 1T 436; 2T 75, 381, 409, 413, 457, 511; 3T 464; 4T 371, 434, 574

CHAPTER 10

- 1 *The sacraments of the Jews 6 are types of our 's, 7 and their punishments, 11 examples for us. 14 We must fly from idolatry. 21 We must not make the Lord's table the table of devils: 24 and in things indifferent we must have regard of our brethren.*

1. Moreover. Textual evidence attests (cf. p. 10) the reading "for." This reading shows the proper connection between chs. 9 and 10. Having shown the possibility of his being a castaway, the apostle emphasizes the danger of others also being rejected. Though greatly favored by God, the Israelites, who left Egypt, failed to receive the reward of entrance into the Promised Land. If they, the chosen people, and those for whom God had wrought so many mighty miracles, failed, the Corinthians should not be

so puffed up with spiritual pride as to become blind to the danger of meeting the same fate.

Ignorant. The members of the church at Corinth were doubtless at least partially acquainted with the story of the experiences of the ancient Israelites during their exodus from Egypt, but Paul wanted them to remember these things and allow the example of the Israelites to influence their conduct.

Fathers. The church at Corinth was composed of both converted idolaters and Christian Jews. Therefore this reference to the “fathers,” which obviously points to the Israelites under Moses, shows that the Christian church is the continuation of the people of God and has the right to claim spiritual descent from the line of true worshipers back through the centuries of Israel’s history (see Rom. 2:28, 29; Gal. 3:28, 29).

Cloud. This refers to the visible presence of God with His people in their wanderings from Egypt to Canaan. By day a cloud preceded the host of Israel as they marched, and at night it became to them a pillar of fire (see on Ex. 13:21).

Sea. A reference to the crossing of the Red Sea by the children of Israel over a path miraculously prepared for them by the Lord (see Ex. 14:21, 22). This was a further proof of divine protection and favor. Paul reminded the Corinthian believers of all these special provisions made for ancient Israel by the Lord, and showed that the children of Israel had as many apparent securities against apostasy as those on which the church in Corinth relied so much.

2. Baptized. The experience of the children of Israel was figurative of baptism. With the cloud above them and the sea on both sides, the Israelites were enveloped by water when they passed through the sea, and in this sense were baptized. Their experience may be thought of as representing cleansing from their past allegiance to sin in the darkness of Egyptian bondage, and a pledge of loyalty to God through His appointed representative, Moses.

Unto Moses. They were guided by the cloud to the shore of the Red Sea, and then, as Moses commanded them to go forward, God opened the way for them, and they passed over safely to the other side. By this experience they were dedicated to Moses as their leader (see Ex. 14:13–16, 21, 22). They recognized his authority and bound themselves to obey his instructions. As their “visible leader,” Moses passed on to the people God’s laws and requirements. Therefore it might be said that by being baptized “unto Moses” they were pledged to obey God and serve Him (see PP 374). During their long servitude in Egypt the Israelites had to some extent lost sight of the true God and His worship; many were unacquainted with Him, and it was the stated purpose of Jehovah to deliver them from bondage that they might serve Him (see Ex. 3:13–15, 18; 5:1; 6:6, 7; 7:16; Ex. 8:1, 20; 9:1, 13; PP 258). God appointed Moses to lead His people out of Egypt and to instruct them concerning His laws and plans for them (see Ex. 3:10; PP 246, 252, 253). The evidence of God’s acceptance of Moses as His representative was witnessed by the Israelites in their passage through the Red Sea.

3. Spiritual meat. Or, “spiritual food.” The word “meat” is used with its Old English meaning of “food” in general rather than flesh. The word “spiritual” signifies that the food was not provided naturally. Furthermore, Paul was probably also thinking of the spiritual significance of the manna (John 6:32, 33, 35) in the same way as he identified the spiritual Rock as Christ (1 Cor. 10:4). All the Israelites were fed and nourished in this miraculous way in the wilderness. Their food was given to them directly by God. In this

way all of them were given dramatic proof that they were protected and cared for by God. In that waste place there was no other food for them; they were absolutely dependent on the bread that fell from heaven (see Ex. 16:3). If anyone refused to eat the manna, he would perish. Similarly there is no other source of food for the Christian than that which comes from heaven and is personified in the Saviour. The temporal manna supplied for material sustenance sufficed for the earthly needs of the Israelites, but its effect was only temporary, and those who partook of it eventually died. Those who partake of the Word of God, even Jesus Christ, will not perish, but will live forever (see John 6:48–51, 53, 54, 58, 63). In this earthly wilderness men endeavor to feed their minds on human philosophies and inventions, but there is no hope of peace or happiness apart from Christ (see Matt. 11:28, 29; John 10:10; 15:6; 1 Cor. 1:21, 25, 30). Even as the manna had to be gathered every day, in an amount sufficient for the day's need, so must men take the appropriate daily portion of nourishment from the Word of God in order to maintain a vigorous, vital Christian experience (see Ex. 16:16, 21; Job 23:12; Matt. 6:11).

4. *Spiritual drink.* Like the “spiritual meat” of v. 3, the “spiritual drink” was so named because of its supernatural origin. It was provided for the Israelites by the Lord, to meet their urgent need when they were without water in the wilderness (see Ex. 17:1, 6; Num. 20:2, 8). God did not forsake His ungrateful people in spite of their unreasonable complaining, but He supplied their need through the ministration of His chosen servant, Moses (see PP 298, 411).

Spiritual Rock. Some commentators believe that Paul here refers to the rabbinical tradition that a rock-well followed the children of Israel throughout their wilderness wanderings. If so, he does not therefore give credence to the tradition any more than Jesus gave credence to the doctrine of a conscious state in death by His parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus (see on Luke 16:19). The Tosephta (see Vol. V, p. 100) reports the tradition thus: “It was likewise with the well that was with the children of Israel in the wilderness, it [the well] was like a rock that was full of holes like a sieve from which water trickled and arose as from the opening of a flask. It [the rock-well] ascended with them to the top of the hills and descended with them into the valleys; wherever Israel tarried there it tarried over against the entrance to the tabernacle” (*Sukkah* 3. 11 ff., cited in Strack and Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament*, vol. 3, p. 406). Compare PP 411–421.

Was Christ. The Saviour is here portrayed as the dependable rock upon which sinful, stumbling, repentant men can rely for refreshing, life-giving drink that will quench their burning thirst for divine truth (see Ps. 42:1, 2; Ps. 63:1; John 7:37). The great truth taught by this verse is that Jesus is with His people all the way through this earthly life, and is ever ready to supply their needs when they call upon Him. The world is a dry, dreary desert, providing neither food nor drink for the soul that is hungry and thirsty for spiritual truth, but the steadfast Saviour is willing and able to uphold, sustain, and strengthen His fainting people if they will but call upon Him (see Ps. 46:1; 91:15).

Historically, Christ was Israel's leader, not only in their wilderness wanderings, but throughout their entire history as a nation. In fact, all of God's dealings with fallen humanity have been through Christ (see PP 311, 366, 373, 396; DA 52).

5. *With many.* Literally, “with the many.” Although Israel was greatly favored by God with mighty manifestations of His power, there were few out of the large company that left Egypt under the leadership of Moses who were willing to obey Him. The record

tells of repeated murmurings and rebellion even after they had crossed the Red Sea in such a miraculous manner (see Ex. 16:2, 3, 27, 28; 17:3; 32:1, 6; Num. 11:1, 2, 4, 10, 13; 14:2, 26–30). One act of disobedience after another brought upon those highly favored people the judgments of the Lord, until finally He decreed that they should perish in the wilderness (see on Num. 14:29). God had intended that all who set out on the journey to Canaan should have homes in that land flowing with milk and honey (see Ex. 3:8, 17; 13:5). He had made clear that He would guide, guard, instruct, and provide for them, but they refused to believe and obey. Thus they lost their inheritance. In turn their children were given the opportunity to inherit the land.

Overthrown. Gr. *katastrōnnumi*, literally, “to strew down along [the ground].” The word occurs only here in the NT, but it is found in the LXX of Num. 14:16. The unbelieving, disobedient Israelites were strewn along the ground in their wanderings through the wilderness because they refused to trust in the love and guidance of their heavenly Father and because they indulged in the gratification of fleshly desires and lusts (see Num. 11:5, 6, 32, 33; 16:31–35, 49; 25:1–5, 9).

The apostle here showed the Corinthian believers that their blessings and privileges did not confer upon them unconditional immunity from temptation. It was necessary for them to be continually on the alert to avoid sin. The favors and blessings bestowed by God upon His people never save them from the just penalty of willful disobedience and rejection of His plain instructions.

6. Were. Literally, “became.”

Our examples. Or, “examples for us.”

Examples. That is, examples for us to shun. The things that befell the Israelites in their journey from Egypt to Canaan were illustrations of what will surely happen if His people, who enjoy such abundant blessings and favors on their journey toward the heavenly Canaan, make the same mistakes and disobey God as did the host of Israel in the wilderness. Punishment will come to Christians who disobey the Lord just as surely as it came to Israel for their rebellious acts. Knowledge of God that is greater than that possessed by others does not grant license to ignore any of God’s requirements. On the contrary, greater knowledge brings greater responsibility for strict adherence to all God’s instructions. Disobedience under such circumstances is much more serious than in the case of those who do not have so much light (see Luke 12:47, 48; James 4:17).

Lust. The clause reads literally, “that ye might not become lusters after evil things.” The Israelites were habitually governed by desire. They were not guided by calm reason, but by the promptings of unsanctified passions and appetites (see Ex. 16:3; Num. 11:4, 5). There is danger that God’s people will repeat the error of Israel in this respect; this is evident from the warning found in such passages as Matt. 24:37–39; Luke 17:26–30.

Lusted. Gr. *epithumeō*, “to desire earnestly,” “to have an inordinate desire for,” “to desire something beyond the limit of that which is legitimate.”

7. Neither be ye. The command may be translated, “stop being [or “becoming”] idolaters,” implying that some of the Israelites lapsed into idolatry.

Idolaters. This is primarily a reference to the worship of the golden calf by the people while Moses was in the mount with God (see Ex. 32:1–5). The warning was particularly appropriate for the Corinthians, some of whom apparently felt free to attend feasts in idol temples (see on 1 Cor. 8:10; cf. ch. 10:20, 21).

Eat and drink. See on Ex. 32:6.

Play. The quotation is from Ex. 32:6. The Israelites at Mt. Sinai had not forgotten the things they had seen and practiced in Egypt, where idolatry was the state religion. They were well acquainted with the sensual, passionate performances that were associated with the worship of false gods, and they doubtless imitated them at the worship of the golden calf. Feasting and drinking beclouded the mind, so that men were no longer able to discern between good and evil, and they were enslaved by bodily passions, thus exposing themselves to the subtle temptations of the enemy.

8. Neither let us. The command may be translated, “Let us cease committing fornication.” There was a notable case in Corinth at the time (ch. 5). The reference is to the shameful experience of the Israelites at Shittim, where Satan used the Moabitish women to seduce many of the men in the camp of Israel and to influence them to join in the idolatrous worship of the Moabites (see Num. 25:1–5). God had given the Israelites emphatic instructions not to associate with the heathen peoples round about them. He had warned them against the danger of being led away from Him to the worship of false gods (see Deut. 7:1–5).

Three and twenty thousand. See on Num. 25:9.

9. Tempt. Gr. *ekpeirazō*, “to tempt to the limit,” “to tempt thoroughly,” “to try to the utmost.” *Ekpeirazō* occurs elsewhere in the NT only in Matt. 4:7; Luke 4:12; 10:25, and in each case of the testing or tempting of Christ. The command may be translated, “Let us cease tempting.” Paul alludes to the incident recorded in Num. 21:4–6, when the people, who had grown weary and discouraged by the long journey in the wilderness, reproached Moses for bringing them out of Egypt and complained of the manna. Their complaining and dislike of the food God gave them resulted in the plague of “fiery serpents,” by which many of them died (see Num. 21:6).

Christ. Important textual evidence may be cited (cf. p. 10) for reading “the Lord.” Regardless of which is chosen, it was Christ who was with the Israelites in the wilderness, and it was He whose patience they tried to the utmost with their rebellion and murmurings. Christ is ever present with His people by His Spirit, to teach, protect, guide, and deliver them (see Matt. 28:20; John 14:16–18; 16:13). Let believers beware of the folly of trying the Saviour’s patience by insisting on retaining their old appetites, customs, and desires, instead of gladly abandoning everything that pertains to the old unregenerate life in favor of the provisions the Lord in love makes for them.

10. Neither murmur ye. Or, “Neither continue to murmur.” Two instances of murmuring followed by death are noted in the OT, the one in connection with the ten spies (Num. 13; Num. 14) and the other in connection with the rebellion of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram (Num. 16).

11. Ensamples. An archaic word meaning “examples.” In fact the word here translated “ensamples” is rendered “examples” in v. 6. This does not mean that the Israelites underwent their many and varied experiences merely to provide examples for Christians, but simply that their experience serves as a suitable example to impress the church with the importance of avoiding the mistakes they made.

For our admonition. Literally, “for admonition unto us.” That is, to warn all Christians of all ages not to confide in their own strength or wisdom. The folly of Israel in disobeying God led to their downfall in the wilderness, and later in their history, to their being carried captive to Babylon (see Jer. 17:23, 27; 25:4–11). The warning to Christians to learn the lesson of Israel’s wilderness experience is peculiarly appropriate in

the light of the near approach of the second advent of Christ. Many of the Israelites perished when they had almost completed the journey to Canaan (see Num. 25:9). They were the people whom God had specially favored by giving them knowledge of His law and of Himself beyond any knowledge possessed by any other people in the world, yet they failed to maintain their loyalty to Him. Christians, to whom has been entrusted the gospel of Jesus Christ, and the prophetic knowledge of His soon coming, should beware lest they allow the delusions of sinful human nature to cause them to fail of reaching the heavenly Canaan (see Rom. 11:20; 1 Cor. 10:12; Heb. 3:12–14).

Ends of the world. Gr. *telē tōn aiōnōn*, “ends of the ages,” that is, the expiration of the great past periods of God’s dealings with man. In Heb. 9:26 the first advent of Christ is spoken of as having taken place at “the end of the world” (Gr. *sunteleia tōn aiōnōn*, literally, “consummation of the ages”). The message of the apostle Paul was relevant in his day as is shown by the pronoun “our.” It is increasingly relevant today inasmuch as men now living have the advantage of the accumulated records of all preceding epochs of sacred history, and are living in the time when the purpose of God is to be climaxed by the second coming of Jesus.

12. Wherefore. This introduces the inference to be drawn from the admonitions given in vs. 6–11. It emphasizes the necessity for special attention to be given by Christians to the history of the wanderings of the children of Israel through the wilderness to Canaan. They should learn from the account of the tragic results of Israel’s self-confidence not to place dependence on their own strength, either mental or physical.

Standeth. Although the axiom here presented may be applied generally, its first application would be to the believers in Corinth who thought they were strong in regard to the use of food offered to idols and participation in idolatrous entertainments (see ch. 8:2, 4, 7, 9). Such men thought they had no need to fear the influence of associations with idolatry, but such self-confidence might be the forerunner of a grievous fall (see Prov. 16:18).

Fall. Self-confidence is dangerous. This is illustrated in the case of Peter, who thought that nothing could cause him to swerve from his allegiance to Christ (see Mark 14:31, 50, 67, 68, 70–72). All should heed the warning and be on guard continually, lest they be deceived by the suggestion that they have reached such a state of spiritual strength that nothing can lead them to sin. True safety lies only in the recognition of one’s absolute helplessness apart from Christ, and the constant need of the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit to deliver from sin (see John 14:26; John 15:4–7; 16:7–11, 13; 2 Cor. 12:9, 10). The admonition to “take heed” needs to be repeated frequently, for man is easily convinced that he is well able to take care of himself. Spiritual pride is a great deception, one in which it is easy for the tempter to lead the self-confident believer to fall into grievous sin (cf. 2 Sam. 11:1–4; Rom. 11:20). The exhortation to be constantly on the alert against the danger of spiritual pride is particularly appropriate to those who live in this period of the world’s history, when men are confronted daily with multiplied allurements to indulge in gratification of the carnal appetites (see Luke 21:34–36).

13. Common. Gr. *anthrōpinos*, “human,” that is, normal for human beings, such as human beings can bear. The Corinthians were not to think that the conditions under which they were expected to live faithful lives were exceptional, and that they had difficulties to meet that were peculiar to them. Their trials and temptations were no

different from those experienced by men the world around. This statement seems to be added to the warning of the preceding verse as an encouragement. The Corinthians were in danger of falling, and must watch, but they could take heart because the temptation would not be beyond their strength to endure successfully.

Faithful. God is true to His promises, true to the call He has extended to men to serve Him. If He permitted temptations to come to His people that were beyond their strength to overcome, then His promises would appear to be wholly unreliable (see Ps. 34:19; 1 Cor. 1:9; 2 Peter 2:9). The faithfulness of God is the Christian's source of security against the enemy. There is no security in depending on self, but if the believer relies entirely on the promises of our covenant-keeping God, he will be safe. However, he should remember that God will not deliver him if he deliberately places himself on the enemy's ground by going where he is likely to meet temptation (see Matt. 7:13, 14, 24, 25; 1 Cor. 9:25, 27; 10:14; Gal. 5:24; 2 Tim. 2:22; EW 124, 125; MB 118).

Suffer. That is, permit. The fact that God, to whom the Christian entrusts himself, will not permit the enemy to tempt His children beyond their strength and ability to endure should be a source of great encouragement. It is not God's wish that men should suffer. God does not tempt man (see James 1:13). Man has brought this condition of affairs upon himself by his disobedience (see Gen. 1:27, 31; 3:15–19; Eccl. 7:29; Rom. 6:23). Since this is the case, God uses these experiences to develop human character according to His will (see 1 Peter 4:12, 13; MH 470, 471, 478). When men are tempted, therefore, they should remember that the temptation comes, not because God sends it, but because He permits it. Moreover, if rightly met, in the strength God supplies, temptations may be the means of accelerating the Christian's growth in grace. Seeing that God has given assurance that temptations are never beyond the individual's strength to endure, man himself is entirely responsible for falling into sin.

A way to escape. Literally, "the way out." The "the" indicates that for every particular temptation there is a particular provision made by God for escape. This "way out" is not a way to avoid the temptation, but a way out of the tragedy of falling into sin, of being overcome by the temptation. At the same time that God permits the trial or temptation to come, He will also have in readiness the means whereby we may gain the victory and escape from committing sin. Jesus, the Christian's example of right living, found that "way out" in the written Word of God (see Luke 4:4, 8, 12). So we, His followers, may find the "way out" in Jesus, the living Word (see John 1:1–3, 14). He is ever ready and willing to deliver those who call upon Him and to keep them from falling into sin (Ps. 9:9; 27:5; 41:1; 91:15; 2 Peter 2:9; Rev. 3:10).

14. Wherefore. That is, considering the dangers to which the Corinthians would be exposed by joining in idolatrous feasts, and in view of the provision made for every trusting follower of the Lord to have victory over all the efforts of Satan to make him commit sin, the counsel is given to avoid entirely all contact with idolatry.

Flee. That is, make it a habit to flee. The command suggests urgency, haste, immediate and continuing attention to the business of getting as far away as possible from all contact with idolatry. There must be no compromise with anything connected with idols.

Idolatry. Paul's advice to the Corinthians who were debating the question of how much contact with idol temples, entertainments, and food, was permissible to the follower of Christ, is good advice also to Christians everywhere and at all times. Idolatry

may appear in many forms, including the greed for gain, the passion for power over one's fellows, the gratification of bodily appetites of various types, and the mad craze for pleasure (see AA 317). The dangers that are present in association with those who do not love and obey God are so great that the Lord calls upon His people to separate themselves from intimate contact with such (see 2 Cor. 6:14–17; cf. Rev. 18:1–4). No man is strong enough to expose himself deliberately and without necessity to contact with “idolatry” in any form, and avoid contamination.

15. Wise. Gr. *phronimoi*, “intelligent,” “prudent,” “sensible,” that is, those who are able to understand what is said and to form right conclusions. Paul appealed to the Corinthian believers’ own insight and good sense, which made them capable of judging for themselves as to the correctness of what he was about to say. By making this appeal the apostle gave evidence that he himself was thoroughly convinced of the truth of his position. The reasons that he was about to present for the position he took in the matter of participation in idolatrous entertainments were such as commend themselves to wise men. These reasons occupy the remainder of the chapter. All the commands and counsel of God are of such a nature that they appeal to wise men, and He invites us to reason things out with Him, well knowing that His position is always sound.

Judge ye. There may be a touch of sarcasm in this statement, a gentle reminder of the pretentious claims of the Corinthians to knowledge (see chs. 1:5; 8:1, 2, 10). Each member is exhorted to use his intellect to examine carefully all the instruction given by the Lord through His servant Paul, and see whether it is not perfectly reasonable and just.

16. Cup of blessing. That is, the cup over which the blessing is pronounced in the celebration of the ordinance of the Lord’s Supper. When instituting this ordinance on the occasion of the last Passover supper that He ate with His disciples immediately before His arrest, Jesus took wine, “gave thanks,” and then passed it to the disciples and instructed all of them to partake of it (see Matt. 26:27; 1 Cor. 11:25; DA 149, 653). Paul now continues the discussion of the danger involved in eating things offered to idols. His argument is based on the fact that through participation in the communion service believers become partakers of the body and blood of Christ, thereby becoming one body with Christ (see Matt. 26:26–28; John 6:51, 53–56; 1 Cor. 11:23–26; DA 660, 661). After having testified to their oneness with Christ in this way, would it not be incongruous for them to take part in the idol feasts and so enter into communion with the evil spirits to whom the sacrificial offerings were made (1 Cor. 10:21)?

Which we bless. Christ “gave thanks” (Matt. 26:27) for the cup, an act that is paralleled by the prayer of gratitude for the spilled blood of Jesus which we offer before partaking of the wine in the communion service. When Christians drink this cup they give thanks to God in their hearts for all the blessings He has provided through the blood of Jesus. They silently praise Him for rescuing them from the slavery of sin and giving to them the glorious freedom of sons and daughters of God.

Communion. Gr. *koinōnia*, “fellowship,” “sharing.”

Of the blood. The blood represents the death of the Son of God, and by faith believers share in that death. Thus those who participate in a heathen sacrifice become sharers in that sacrifice. Perhaps the reason why Paul mentions the cup before the bread, the reverse order from that in Matt. 26:26, 27, and 1 Cor. 11:23–25, is that Paul wished to place the subject of the partaking of the bread next to the subject of meats sacrificed to idols. He is

not discussing here the significance of the Lord's Supper, nor is he setting forth the order in which the emblems should be served.

Bread. As the bread is broken in the communion service before it is given to the participants, so the body of the Saviour was broken on behalf of all the world, but only those who confess their sins and seek for pardon are benefited by the sacrifice that has been made by Christ (see Matt. 26:26; 1 Cor. 11:23, 24, 26, 29; 1 John 1:9; 2:1, 2).

17. For. Gr. *hoti*, here meaning "seeing that," "because." This word begins a new sentence, and the passage may be translated, "Seeing that there is one bread, we who are many are one body."

One bread. This is an allusion to the fact that the communion bread is broken into many pieces, which are eaten by the believers; and as all the pieces come from the same loaf, so all the believers who partake of the communion service are united in Him whose broken body is thus typified by the broken bread. By partaking together of this ordinance, Christians show publicly that they are united and belong to one great family, whose head is Christ.

As material bread is one of the principal sources of nutrition for mankind, so Christ is the spiritual food of which all must partake in order to maintain spiritual health (see John 6:50, 51, 56, 57). There are many kinds of bread, made from different kinds of grain, such as wheat, barley, rye, corn; but there is only one spiritual bread that gives spiritual sustenance. There are not many different Lords and Saviours, but only one, and man cannot find his way to eternal life by any other means than through partaking of the Bread that came down from heaven in the person of Jesus Christ (see Matt. 24:5, 24; John 6:33, 53, 54; Acts 4:12; 1 Tim. 2:5, 6).

18. Behold Israel. An appeal is made to the record of the practices of the people whom God had favored with direct instructions concerning the method that was to be followed in worshiping Him.

After the flesh. That is, according to the flesh. The phrase denotes those who were Israelites by natural descent from Abraham. Even though they have failed to recognize Jesus as the Messiah, and have in some things turned aside from the counsel of God, the fact remains that the account of the laws and regulations relative to the Temple services, given by the Lord through Moses to the Jews while they were encamped at Sinai, is a reliable statement of the form of worship required of them by God. This record contains many principles of truth that pertain to Christians as much as to Jews, and the teaching of the unity that God desires to see among His people is one of the most important of those principles.

Partakers. Priests and laity became one in their united worship at the altar; that was their visible means of communion with God, and it was there that they were all on the same level before God and shared the fellowship of His family. This union in the sacrificial services of the altar identified them as members of the people of Israel, worshipers of Jehovah, the one true God.

19. What say I then? That is, What is the meaning of that which I have been saying to you? Does my reasoning justify the belief that an idol has real existence? The answer is negative. Paul did not wish to imply that an idol had any importance, or that the food offered to it differed from any other food simply because it had been used in that way.

Emphasis on the truth that idols are of no importance in this world would naturally lead to the conclusion that the things offered to idols are nothing. This deduction is true.

But lest the believers should draw the conclusion that, such being the case, they could mingle with idolaters, taking part in their heathen feasts without compromising Christian principles, Paul gave warning regarding the true nature of idolatry (v. 20).

20. But. What, then, is the real import of all that has been said about the danger of having any form of contact with idols and their worship? Paul rejects the idea that the nothingness of idols, or the nothingness of things offered to idols, removes the objection to participation in the entertainments at idol temples.

Devils. Gr. *daimonia*, “demons.” In the LXX of Ps. 96:5 *daimonia* translates the Heb. *elilim*, which means literally, “nothings,” and in the LXX of Deut. 32:17 the Heb. *shedim*, “evil spirits,” “demons.” In the NT *daimonia* is always used of evil spirits (see Matt. 7:22; Mark 1:34, 39; 1 Tim. 4:1; etc. cf. Eph. 6:12). See on Mark 1:23; see Additional Note on Mark 1.

Fellowship with devils. Knowing the real nature of idol worship, that is communing with Satan and his evil angels, Paul urgently admonishes the Corinthians to avoid idolatry. Christians are solemnly dedicated to Christ; they belong to Him by creation and redemption, and they cannot give the least degree of sanction to a form of worship that would give honor to any being other than the one true God (see Ex. 20:3–5; Matt. 4:9, 10). Likewise it is wrong for Christians to allow their time or affections to be given to anything or any person in preference to God and His service. He must come first at all times, and His service must have first consideration always (see Matt. 22:37).

21. Cannot. The inability imposed upon believers by their knowledge of the real nature of idolatry is not physical but moral. How could those who are dedicated to the true God partake of drink offerings to Satan and his host?

Cup of the Lord. This is a reference to the wine of the communion service (see Matt. 26:27, 28). This cup belongs to the Lord, it has been consecrated to Him, and is the communion of His blood; therefore it brings those partaking of it into fellowship with Him.

Cup of devils. A symbol of all the feasting in honor of heathen gods. Satan and his followers are ever seeking to oppose and overthrow the good and wise government of God and establish the rule of sin and rebellion. Between these two ways of life there can be no communion or association. There can be no compromise between God and Satan, truth and error, righteousness and sin. Every man is called upon to choose whom he will serve. It is impossible to hold fellowship with God and with Satan at the same time; one or the other must be renounced (see Gen. 35:2–4; Joshua 24:14–16; 1 Kings 18:21; Matt. 6:24).

22. Provoke. Will Christians, endowed with all the light of the gospel, having their eyes opened to the truth concerning the nature of idol worship, run the risk of arousing the anger of the Lord by participation in idolatrous feasts? Will they allow their sensual appetites and passions so to becloud their reason that they defy their Lord by indulgence in idolatrous entertainments? The warning contained in the second commandment is sufficient to indicate the attitude of God toward idolatry, showing that He looks upon such worship as a direct insult to Himself (see Ex. 20:5). Our God is a jealous God and will not share the homage and obedience of His people with any other power (see Ex. 20:4, 5; Ex. 34:12–16; Joshua 24:19; Matt. 6:24). To join in the worship of idols by participating in their feasts would be to take part in that which God has always regarded

with particular abhorrence, and which, more than anything else, is a source of provocation (see Lev. 19:4; Lev. 26:30; Deut. 18:10–12; 1 Cor. 6:9; Eph. 5:5; Rev. 21:8; Rev. 22:15).

Anything in one's life that has the effect of taking the affections away from God and fixing them on other beings or things is a sin similar to that of the Corinthians in taking part in idol feasts and entertainments. Any attachment to friends, property, fame, popularity, or material success, which leads an individual to give time or attention to those things to such an extent that the worship of God is neglected, is idolatrous in nature and merits only the rebuke and wrath of God (see Matt. 10:37–39; Luke 14:26).

Jealousy. To illustrate His love for mankind God uses the figure of marriage (see Jer. 6:2; 2 Cor. 11:2). Departure from God to worship idols is pictured by the prophets as adultery (see Hosea 4:12–15; 8:14; 9:1, 15, 17). God, as the husband of His church, wants His bride to be exclusively His, and is very jealous of that which draws her affections away from Him. Surely no Christian who truly loves the Lord will ever permit anyone or anything to arouse His jealousy. Therefore no Christian can ever associate with anything that is idolatrous in nature.

Stronger. The construction of the question in Greek anticipates a negative answer. No man can contend successfully with God; therefore it is extreme folly to engage in any form of activity contrary to His commands and expect to escape the divine penalty. This principle should be taken into consideration by those who love sin and continue to engage in it, and at the same time profess to love and serve God. However, this fact of the certainty of judgment should not be the chief motive of our service, but rather our recognition of God's wondrous love and faithfulness (see Rom. 5:8; 8:35; 1 Cor. 10:13).

23. Lawful for me. See on ch. 6:12.

Expedient. Gr. *sumpherō*, literally, “to bring together” used impersonally, as here, the meaning is “advantageous,” “profitable.” Although a Christian is lawfully entitled to do everything that is not out of harmony with the will of God, there are times when it would not be profitable for him to do certain things, nor would it serve to “bring together,” or unite in the belief of the truth, others who might observe the behavior of the Christian. The believer must consider how to behave so that he will help others in their efforts to live aright. If his “lawful” behavior would place a stumbling block in another's way, then he should refrain from the course that perplexes his brother (see Matt. 18:7–10; Rom. 14:13, 15; 1 Cor. 8:9; 1 John 2:10). The welfare of others, rather than one's own convenience, must dictate what the Christian does, if he is to do all things well.

Edify. Gr. *oikodomeō*, “to build up.” This word explains what Paul means by “expedient.” Christian behavior should be governed by the principle here laid down; namely, that all things be done with the glory of God and the blessing of one's fellow men in mind. Those who do not follow this principle, but permit themselves to do anything they desire, provided that it is not of itself sinful, will frequently do that which injures others. Circumstances might make something wrong which is not of itself a sin.

Though it might be admitted that per se it was no sin to eat meat offered to idols, there were good reasons why, under certain circumstances, it should not be eaten. Not all things have the effect of building up the church and promoting the interests of the gospel. Paul constantly sought to advance the welfare of the church, with the object of saving souls. Whatever would legitimately aid in that course was right and proper; anything, no matter how lawful, that would hinder it was to be avoided. Those who love the Lord are

anxious to do all in their power to influence men and women to turn from sin to serve God, and they will so conduct themselves that their influence will at all times be helpful. They will eat, dress, converse, furnish their homes, and order their manner of life in such a way that they will be able to do good to the limit of their ability. They may not be able to quote any particular passage of Scripture that condemns a certain course of action, but they will perceive that it is not conducive to the spiritual interests of others, and therefore not expedient (see Rom. 14:21–23; 1 Cor. 6:12).

24. *Seek his own.* The believer should not seek first of all to gratify his won desires and pleasures and conveniences; he ought to consider first the welfare of others. Let him ask himself the question, Will the gratification of my own taste and inclinations help or injure others? Many things may be permissible, but their practice might bring spiritual harm to others; therefore it is the duty of the Christian to abstain from them. In cases where a certain thing is not positively forbidden to a Christian, but where his example would greatly influence others, he should be guided in his behavior, not by his own desires, comfort, or convenience, but by consideration of the effect of his conduct on others.

Another's wealth. Gr. *to tou heterou*, literally, “that which is the other’s.” The word “wealth” is here used in the Old English sense of “well-being.” The true Christian seeks to be like his Master, who “went about doing good” (Acts 10:38). He is actuated, not by selfish motives, but by the spirit of Jesus, which prompts him to put into practice the principle of the golden rule (see Matt. 7:12; Rom. 13:10).

25. *Shambles.* Gr. *makellon*, from the Latin *macellum*, “meat market.” The remains of a large market have been unearthed at Corinth, with colonnades and small shops surrounding a paved court. A marble slab built into the pavement of one of the shops bears a Latin inscription that refers to a fish market, using the word *macellum* for “market.” Perhaps this was the “market” here referred to.

When sacrifices were made at idolatrous temples, portions of the animal were often sold in the market. Since this meat was not kept separate from other meat offered for sale in the market, a Christian might unknowingly purchase meat that had been offered to idols. The counsel of the apostle is: such meat may be freely purchased by Christians.

For conscience sake. Literally, “on account of the conscience,” or “because of the conscience.” It was not necessary for the Christians to ask the seller whether the meat had been offered to idols. See on ch. 8:7.

26. *The Lord's.* A quotation from Ps. 24:1. This passage was later used by Jews as a common form of thanksgiving before a meal (Talmud *Shabbath* 119a, Soncino ed., p. 586). Whether the custom was already established in the time of Paul or was practiced in Corinth is uncertain. God causes all things to grow. He provides for the needs of His children (see on 1 Tim. 4:4).

27. *That believe not.* That is, friends, relatives, or others who are not Christians.

To a feast. These words are supplied. The context makes clear that the invitation is to a meal in a private home, not a sacrificial celebration at a heathen temple. It often happens that Christians are offered hospitality by non-Christians, and Christians are under no obligation to reject such offers. They have the example of Christ, who accepted the hospitality of those who were not His followers (see Luke 11:37). Christianity does

not require believers to become hermits, who abstain from all social contact with their fellow men (see Rom. 12:13; Titus 1:8; Heb. 13:2; 2T 645).

Disposed to go. Literally, “desire to go.” Many valuable opportunities may be lost by reluctance to accept offers of hospitality from unbelievers. All over the world the invitation to share a meal is a gesture of friendliness, and indicates an attitude of willingness to give attention to what the invited guest may say. All such occasions should be used by the Christian to witness for the Lord and to direct attention to the love of God and His plan for the salvation of man. Jesus accepted invitations from unbelievers with this objective in mind (see DA 150, 151).

Whatsoever is set before you. This phrase must be interpreted in its context. The subject is the propriety of eating meats sacrificed to idols. It is with regard to this that the invited guest was asked to lay aside his scruples and gladly partake of the food provided for him. He is not to embarrass his host or place himself in a compromising situation by making inquiries as to whether the meat on the table had earlier been an offering to the false gods worshiped by his host. However, this statement does not sanction the use of foods elsewhere forbidden. The meat must be such as the Christian can conscientiously eat without transgressing God’s requirements relative to clean and unclean meats (Lev. 11). If it meets the requirement he may receive it graciously and thankfully, without asking any questions (cf. on Rom. 14:1). The instruction relates to the question of the use of food that has been offered to idols, and is not concerned with the fitness of food from the standpoint of nutrition and health. The Christian ought to know that he is expected to use his discretion regarding injurious food that would be a danger to his physical well-being (see Rom. 12:1, 2; 1 Cor. 6:19, 20).

28. *Any man.* Paul does not identify the one here referred to. Some believe he refers to a pagan participant; others that he refers to a fellow Christian present at the meal who is “weak” (see on Rom. 14:1). In favor of the former is the fact that the word here translated “offered in sacrifice unto idols” means “sacrificed to the gods,” a term the pagan, who would not call his gods “idols,” would use. In favor of the latter view is the observation that the pagan’s conscience would hardly come under consideration (see 1 Cor. 10:29).

Eat not. The basis for refusal is the effect of the action on others (see on vs. 23, 24). Christians will refrain from conduct that gives unnecessary offense to anyone, particularly to a fellow believer.

Conscience. There is no need to eat anything that is questionable. There is no need to encourage idolaters by knowing eating such meat, or to tempt other Christians to eat when they do not fully understand the matter, and when they doubt in their own minds the lawfulness of such an act. Christians who love God and know His law will not deliberately do anything that would offend the conscience of others.

Lord’s. Textual evidence attests (cf. p. 10) the omission of the clause “the earth is the Lord’s, and the fulness thereof.” It is well attested, however, in v. 26.

29. *Of the other.* Paul’s appeal in this verse is based on the fact that Christian love will not knowingly hurt the feelings of anyone unnecessarily, or create a false impression and so lead someone into sin (see ch. 13:4–6). The weaker brother who does not fully understand the problem will probably censure and condemn the other as one who is willing to compromise with idolaters. This being the case, why should one so act as to expose himself to such an accusation? Would it not be better to abstain from eating the

meat, and so avoid causing any misunderstanding or giving offense needlessly? One's own rights and privileges should be quickly laid aside in order that a brother may not be injured (see Rom. 15:1, 2; 1 Cor. 10:24, 33; 13:5; Phil. 2:4). Christians should beware of exercising their liberty in such a manner that a stumbling block would be placed in the way of others, or that they themselves would be reproached.

My liberty. Verse 29 (second part) and v. 30 may represent the outcry of the strong brother, whom Paul seems to be representing as protesting against the restriction on his liberties. See on v. 30.

30. By grace. Here meaning "with thankfulness," a reference to the prayer of thanksgiving at meals. For the background of the statement of v. 30 see on v. 29. If a man gives thanks to God for what he eats, and can without qualms of conscience, why should he be criticized?

Evil spoken of. Gr. *blasphēmeō*, "to rail at," "to revile," "to slander."

31. Whether. In conclusion Paul sets forth a rule that is simple, easily understood, yet comprehensive, profound, and far reaching. Consciously and with unwavering determination the Christian must do everything, even the routine items of daily life, in such a way that God, not man, is honored. Such a course calls for constant dedication of all the powers of mind and body to Him, and daily surrender of all one's being to His Spirit (see Prov. 18:10; 1 Cor. 15:31; 2 Cor. 4:10; Col. 3:17).

Eat, or drink. Primarily the application is to the question of eating or drinking that which has any part in idol worship, but the admonition has a general application to food and drink of all kinds. Men are given the power of choice, but the Christian will exercise his choice at all times in a way that meets with the approval of God. Health must be protected as well as character (see 2T 70; Ed 195). Food and drink are of major importance in relation to the preservation of health. Many illnesses that afflict mankind are due to errors in diet (see MH 295; CD 122, 123). God requires men to care for their bodies and to keep them fit to be temples of His Spirit (see 1 Cor. 6:19, 20). Hence, Christians must learn how to select food and drink that will not injure the body, but will promote health, both mental and physical (see CD 118, 119). The ancient Israelites were assured that God would preserve them in health if they would obey His instructions (see Ex. 15:26; Deut. 7:12–15; cf. ch. 28:58–61). This He will do for His people now if they will follow His counsel and take into their bodies only those things that are in harmony with His laws (see Gen. 1:29; 3:18; Lev. 11:2–31; Eccl. 10:17; 1 Cor. 10:6; CD 121; MH 113; DA 824; CH 168). The Christian ideal is the original diet provided by the Creator in Eden (Gen. 1:29).

Whatsoever ye do. The injunction is broadened to include all the actions and plans of life. Christians are not at liberty to follow the promptings of the natural, unconverted heart and the impulses of the unregenerate body. They are under obligation to bring every thought, word, and deed into harmony with God's revealed will (see Col. 3:17; 1 Peter 4:11; AA 482, 483; 2T 590, 591). The religion of Christ concerns all the affairs of man, whether in the physical, the mental, or the spiritual realm. The redemption provided in Christ is a complete redemption that applies to the entire man (see Rom. 8:5–9, 13, 14; 1 Cor. 9:27; Gal. 5:16, 24; 1 Thess. 5:23; CH 67, 68).

Glory. Or, "honor" (see on Rom. 3:23). The Christian's first motive in living in harmony with the laws of God should be to promote the honor of God. This motive arises from his love for God and his desire to please his Maker (see John 14:15; 1 John 5:3). All

the energies of the soul should be used to advance the interests of God's kingdom, and so to honor God.

32. Give none offence. Christians should never act in such a way that others are led into sin by their influence (see Rom. 14:13). Three classes of people are mentioned here, and the warning is against offending any of them. These three classes include the entire community at any place, Jews, Christians, pagans. The Corinthian believers were to avoid offending the Jews by having contact with idolatry, for the Jews abhorred idols and their worship. Christians should do nothing that would lead them to think that they condoned or approved of idol worship; to do this would be to prejudice them more against Christianity and strengthen them in their opposition to it. So believers should stay away from all idol entertainments. The Gentiles, that is, all who were not Jews or Christians, were attached to idol worship and sought to justify it by any means possible. Christians should do nothing that would encourage them in it. Many members of the church at Corinth were not as fully convinced of the true nature of idolatry as they ought to be, and the stronger brethren were admonished to be careful to avoid all conduct that would confuse such members in their thinking. This principle is of perpetual application. Never should a Christian do anything that would needlessly offend anyone, be he Jew, pagan, or fellow Christian. He should seek to lead those who do not know God to a recognition of His goodness, wisdom, and love, in this way fulfilling the great purpose of their redemption, which is the wisdom of God (see Isa. 43:25; Eze. 36:22, 23; John 17:23). The world seeks peace of mind, but there is only one sure way to find real peace, and that is to follow Paul's counsel.

33. Please all. Paul had the all-absorbing purpose of saving men, and he was prepared to do whatever could be legitimately done in order to achieve this objective; therefore he was determined to make the interests of others superior to his own interests, in order that he might draw them to Christ. He sought to avoid arousing prejudice by not needlessly insisting on his rights or stirring up opposition. Christ's kingdom is established on principles entirely different from those upon which the kingdoms of this world are founded. Man's thoughts are naturally opposed to God's thoughts because of his sinful nature (see Ps. 51:5; Rom. 8:6, 7). Man naturally tries to exalt himself, to assert his own ideas and opinions irrespective of the feelings and beliefs of others, but the Christian denies self, exalts Christ, and devotes his life to the salvation of others (see Matt. 16:25; Mark 8:35; DA 550).

Many. Literally, "the many," meaning the majority. Paul did not discriminate and seek the good of only certain ones who met his specifications; he was interested, as are all true Christians, in the salvation of all men of all races and all conditions of society.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

- 1 AA 315
- 1, 2 PP 282
- 1-5TM 98
- 3, 4 AA 315
- 4 PP 366, 411
- 5, 6 4T 162
- 5-121T 652; 2T 451
- 6 AA 316; CD 378
- 6, 7 TM 99

6–151T 284
 8 AA 316
 9–113T 355
 11 CD 378; CT 166; DA 106; Ed 50; FE 374; MH 438; PK 177; PP 293; TM 101, 420; 1T 527, 533, 609; 3T 358; 6T 410; 8T 115, 285
 11, 12 PP 457; 4T 162
 12 CH 585; COL 155; CT 345, 347; MYP 73; PK 60; TM 98, 103, 238; 2T 283; 3T 445; 4T 560; 5T 483, 537, 624
 12, 13 AA 316
 13 AH 402; CD 154; DA 129; Ev 237; MB 118; MH 248; ML 94, 313; MYP 81; PP 421; Te 105
 14 1T 277
 20 GC 556; PP 685
 23 9T 215
 24 2T 622
 31 AA 317; AH 369; CD 34, 44, 56, 111, 244, 291; CG 68, 376; CT 299; Ev 265; FE 75, 425, 427, 514; GW 128; ML 141, 161; MM 275; MYP 317, 360, 364; PP 362; Te 29, 62, 137, 148, 162, 185; TM 408; 1T 514; 2T 65, 69, 129, 262, 356, 359, 368, 405, 586; 3T 84, 163, 412; 6T 171; 9T 112, 159; WM 267
 31–332T 673
 33 DA 550

CHAPTER 11

5

1 *He reproveth them, because in holy assemblies 4 their men prayed with their heads covered, and 6 women with their heads uncovered, 17 and because generally their meetings were not for the better but for the worse, as 21 namely in profaning with their own feasts the Lord's supper. 23 Lastly, he calleth them to the first institution thereof.*

1. Followers. Gr. *mīmētai*, “imitators.” Our word “mimics” comes from this Greek word. This verse more suitably forms the conclusion of ch. 10 than the introduction to ch. 11. In asking the Corinthians to give up their own desires and pleasures for the sake of others who might misunderstand their motives, Paul asks them to do only what he himself did. He had first shown them by his own example how they ought to behave in relation to the will of God, and then, with the words of this verse, he brings to a conclusion his discussion of the matter of eating meat offered to idols and partaking in idol feasts (see Rom. 15:1–3; 1 Cor. 8:13; 1 Cor. 9:12, 19, 22, 23).

As I. Every minister of the gospel of Jesus Christ ought to be able to appeal to his hearers to imitate his example in following the Master. If he cannot, there is every reason for him to search his own heart and to plead with God that he may live for Him in all respects, and not for self in anything. Paul made Christ his pattern, and he could safely exhort the Corinthians to follow his example. Christ is the great example for all men, and Christians should look to Him for guidance, and accept only that which is in complete harmony with His teaching and example (see Matt. 16:24).

⁵Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment*. Commentary Reference Series (1 Co 9:1). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.

2. Praise. Paul always sought to commend the believers wherever possible (see Eph. 1:15, 16; Phil. 1:3–5; Col. 1:3, 4; 1 Thess. 1:2–4, 7, 8; 2:19, 20). There were some things that it was necessary for Paul to say to them that might not be so acceptable, but before dealing with them he gave commendation where he could. Although they were somewhat slow in following the self-denying and conciliatory behavior of the apostle, the Corinthians were, nevertheless, generally careful to observe the rules of Christian conduct that they had been taught. It is possible, however, that Paul is referring to a particular statement in the letter the Corinthians had written, which may have run something like this: Inasmuch as it is our aim to follow your instruction we would like to have your opinion on the subject of the veiling of women in public religious services.

Remember. Differences of opinion had arisen among them regarding certain practices in the church, and they had agreed to consult their teacher.

Ordinances. Gr. *paradoseis*, “rules,” “principles,” “instructions,” elsewhere translated “traditions” (Gal. 1:14), or, in the singular, “tradition” (Matt. 15:2; etc.). The word means literally, “things handed over.” The idea of being handed down from one generation to another is not necessarily in the word. Paul is referring to the regulations he had given the Corinthians concerning public worship and private conduct. He did not preach the gospel to them and then leave them to formulate their own rules of church order and social life. He did thorough work in the churches that he established, and gave instruction that enabled the new Christians to be confident in their worship and in their daily lives that they were living according to the will of their Lord (see 1 Cor. 4:17; 7:17; 2 Thess. 2:15). By so doing he left an example for all ministers of the gospel to follow. Converts to the faith should be thoroughly instructed concerning all phases of church activity and the affairs of social and domestic life, in order that they may be sure that they are carrying out the desires of the Lord for their well-being in all respects (see Ev 337–339).

Delivered. Gr. *paradidōmi*, the verb form of *paradoseis* (see above under “ordinances”).

3. But. Before answering the inquiry concerning the veiling of women, Paul calls attention to certain considerations that will help them to form a correct opinion on the matter.

Head. Here meaning “lord,” or “master.”

Man. Gr. *anēr*, man as distinguished from woman. Three degrees of submission are here introduced. The man is to acknowledge Christ as his Lord and Master; the woman, while recognizing the supremacy of Christ as Lord over all, is required to acknowledge that in domestic life she is placed under the guidance and protection of man; Christ, although equal with the Father (see Additional Note on John 1), is represented as recognizing God as head. Even among equals there may be a head. A committee of men of equal rank still selects its chairman. Some see a reference here to a voluntary submission of Christ in the working out of the plan of salvation. See further on 1 Cor. 15:25–28. The power and dignity of the husband depends on the position he holds toward Christ, his head, therefore the dependence of the wife on her husband is in the true sense dependence on Christ through the husband. The dependence of the wife on her husband was a divinely appointed plan for the good of both spouses (see PP 58, 59). However, the dependence does not in any way imply the slightest degree of degradation. As the church

does not experience dishonor by being dependent on Christ (see Eph. 1:18–23; 3:17–19; 4:13, 15, 16), neither does woman by being dependent on man.

4. *Every man.* In vs. 4–16 Paul discusses the subject of the covering of the head, particularly in relation to religious services. It should be stated clearly at the outset that this is one of those Pauline passages to which Peter’s words may have applied, that Paul wrote “some things hard to be understood” (2 Peter 3:16). Commentators, in general, confess to perplexity in their endeavors to follow Paul’s argument, and in their attempts to discover the breadth of application of his pronouncements. There seems to be agreement among them that Paul is here dealing with the basic principle of propriety, religious decorum, and good taste, in the context of the customs and manners of the time in which he wrote and the people to whom he wrote.

Unquestionably, certain aspects of this prime principle find different expression in different lands, even changing with the centuries in the various lands. The OT provides a choice illustration of this. When Moses came to the burning bush the Lord commanded him: “Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground” (Ex. 3:5). It was evidently the custom in that area of the world—and is, indeed, still the custom—to show respect for holy places by removing the shoes. The Lord, therefore, was calling upon Moses to show the usual reverence for a holy place. Yet no expositor of the Scriptures has ever concluded that the explicit command of God to Moses sets a precedent for religious worship the world over, certainly not in Occidental countries. The principle of proper reverence still stands inviolate, but the method of expressing such reverence may vary greatly with countries and times.

Similarly, we may understand Paul, in 1 Cor. 11:4–16, to be reasoning with the Corinthians as to the principle of propriety and religious decorum in terms of the particular customs of the day. Though ancient sources fail to give us unequivocal testimony as to custom in headdress in Corinth or elsewhere, it seems evident that custom must have considered an uncovered head as proper for a man but improper for a woman. We say “evident,” for if this were not so, it would be impossible to make sense out of Paul’s argument. Proceeding, then, on the reasonable assumption that Paul is here dealing with the application of a principle to the custom of the country and the times, we are able to take literally and meaningfully his words without following on to conclude that his specific application of the principle then, requires the same specific application today. Thus to conclude would require the illogical procedure of surrendering the premise on which much of his argument rests—the custom of the times—while holding to the conclusion that depends on the premise. That would be equivalent to removing the foundation of a building while seeking to salvage and use the superstructure suspended in mid-air.

There is a further point that may be relevant to the consideration of this whole passage. Paul proclaimed a new and glorious freedom in the gospel. That proclamation had in it the seeds of the Christian principle of the dignity of womankind and her release from the low estate in which all women were held in pagan lands. He declared: “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus” (Gal. 3:28). It would be easy to see how some women converts to Christianity might distort and misuse their liberty in the gospel to bring discredit on the church. One of the libelous, unfounded charges that took shape against Christianity as it spread abroad and aroused the hatred of men was that the Christians

were immoral. Indeed, the charge may already have been whispered abroad in Paul's day. How needful, then, that Christians "abstain from all appearance of evil" (1 Thess. 5:22), how needful that they remember the further counsel of Paul that though a certain course may be lawful it may not be expedient (1 Cor. 6:12).

All that follows in comment on ch. 11:4–16 should be understood in the light of this general, introductory statement, lest on the one hand we bind women in many lands today with grievous burdens that they should not have to bear, or on the other make Paul appear as out of date and as having no message for the twentieth-century reader.

Praying or prophesying. These were important aspects of public worship. In prayer the worshiper is the representative of the congregation, presenting them to God in thanksgiving, petition, and intercession; in prophesying, he is the agent of the Holy Spirit, conveying God's message to His church. The prophesying here mentioned doubtless refers to public preaching and teaching by inspired men, for a prophet is one who speaks for God under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (see 1 Cor. 12:10, 29; 14:1, 4, 22; 1 Thess. 5:20; cf. 2 Peter 1:21).

Having his head covered. Gr. *kata kephalēs echōn*, literally, "having [something] down from the head." Some think there is a reference here to the practice the Jews had of wearing a four-cornered shawl over the head when praying or speaking in worship. This shawl, or tallith, was placed on the worshiper's head when he entered the synagogue. However, it is doubtful that this custom was already established in the time of Paul. The apostle does not necessarily imply that the men in the Corinthian church covered their heads during prayer or prophesying. He seems to refer to such a situation merely as a background to his rebuke for the women who apparently thought it proper to participate, unveiled, in the public spiritual functions here mentioned.

His head. This may refer either to Christ, who is the head of "every man" (v. 3), or to the man's literal head, which would be dishonored by being covered. The man who, as the servant of his Lord, refuses publicly to show respect to Christ, brings dishonor both upon his Lord and upon his own head. Corinth was a Grecian city, and out of consideration for Grecian custom, Paul taught that in worshipping God in that city men should follow the usual manner of showing respect by removing the head covering in the presence of a superior. Men were not to act like women.

5. Woman. This verse brings out the contrast that is to be maintained between the sexes, in the light of current customs, as they take part in church activities.

Prophesieth. There are several instances recorded in the OT where women were endowed with the gift of prophecy, and served the church as prophetesses (Ex. 15:20; Judges 4:4; 2 Kings 22:14; Neh. 6:14). Likewise in NT times there were women in the church who prophesied (Luke 2:36, 37; Acts 21:9). It is possible that the Corinthian women argued that in their discharge of spiritual functions such as prayer and prophesying they should appear uncovered as did the men (1 Cor. 11:4). Some may have also reasoned that the liberty of the gospel (see Gal. 3:28) set aside the obligation to observe various marks of distinction between the sexes. Paul exposed the falsity of their reasoning.

Uncovered. Gr. *akatakalyptos*, literally, "not having a veil hanging down [from the head]." It was customary for women to cover their heads with a veil, as an evidence that they were married, and also as a matter of modesty.

Dishonoureth. In view of the fact that anciently women did not go abroad with uncovered heads, it would be regarded as a disgrace to a woman and to her husband if she should appear publicly without a veil, especially in the capacity of a leader of worship. For a woman at Corinth to take public part in the services of the church with her head uncovered would give the impression that she acted shamelessly and immodestly, without the adorning of shame-facedness and sobriety (see 1 Tim. 2:9). Paul seems to reason that by thus discarding the veil, a recognized emblem of her sex and position, she shows a lack of respect for husband, father, the female sex in general, and Christ.

Shaven. Short hair was sometimes the mark of a woman of poor repute, thus a Corinthian woman who took a part in the public services of the church with her head uncovered might be regarded as having put herself on the same level as a low, perhaps lewd, woman.

6. Let her also be shorn. This is hardly a positive command. The meaning seems to be, “she might as well be shorn.” In other words, if a woman wanted to act like a man, she ought, in order to be consistent, to cut her hair after the fashion of men. But such a course would be regarded as disgraceful. Therefore she should be properly veiled.

7. Image. This is a reference to the condition in which man was created (see Gen. 1:26, 27). If man wore a veil or other head covering, it would be a mark of servitude or inferiority. It would have been inappropriate for him to adopt such a sign. He should be so clothed as not to hide the great fact that he was the appointed representative of God on earth.

Glory. Gr. *doxa*. This word originally meant “opinion,” “reputation,” “recognition.” Based on its usage in the LXX, the meaning “splendor,” “brightness,” “magnificence,” or “character,” “attributes in manifestation” (cf. on John 1:14; Rom. 3:23), has been given to *doxa* by NT writers. Here the expression “glory of God” seems to mean that man has in himself a likeness to the splendor, greatness, and character of God in so far as he manages affairs in his assigned sphere in harmony with divine principles. Here we have a glimpse of the high responsibility to which God has called man. God placed him at the head of the newly created earth, and gave him “dominion, ... over all the earth” (Gen. 1:26). Thus God intended, through man, to reveal His wise and kind parental care, His protection provision, and guidance, before the universe (see CT 33; PP 45). Even after man’s fall and the loss of dominion resulting from it, God planned that man should have the responsibility of leadership in the affairs of the home (see Gen. 3:16; PP 58, 59). There is no indication in the Bible that this order of things has ever been changed since that time, but it appears that some women in the church at Corinth tried to change it.

Glory of the man. In the case of a woman, only the word “glory” is used. The word “image” is omitted, though she too was fashioned in the image of God (see v. 27). Here the relation of woman to man is dealt with, not her relation to God. By her cheerful acceptance of God’s plan for the human family, woman reflects the glory of her husband, and through him the glory of God, who has made such wise provision for mankind (see 3T 483, 484). Woman was made from man, being bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh. Hence, in a certain sense, all her charm, beauty, and purity reflect man’s dignity and honor (see Gen. 2:22, 23). If we rightly understand Paul, this relationship should be maintained, and in the church at Corinth be demonstrated, by the women appearing in public with their head covered by the customary veil.

8. Of the woman. God created Adam first, then Eve to be a suitable companion for him (Gen. 2:20–23). The creation of Adam was an independent one, but this was not so with the woman. She was made from man, and was recognized by him as a part of himself (see Gen. 2:23). Part of man's glory is that woman was created out of his very flesh and bones, specially for him, not to be independent of him, not to have authority over him, but to stand by his side as a "help meet."

9. For the man. This verse is parallel to, and a restatement of, the truth set forth in v. 8. The record of the creation of Adam and Eve shows that the woman was created to be the complement to man. Without Eve, Adam was not provided for adequately; he had no one of his own kind with whom he could converse and share his life experiences, so God met this need by the creation of woman. She was made for man's happiness and comfort. She was not to be a slave but a companion; not to be regarded as of inferior rank, but as man's friend and comforter in life; to share his sorrows and increase his joys; yet especially after the Fall, to be subordinate to him (see Gen. 2:18–22; 3:16; Eph. 5:22–25, 33; 1 Peter 3:5–7). The husband is to be the head of the family and the ruler in the home; the wife is to help him in his duties, comfort him in his afflictions, and share with him in his pleasures. Her position is definitely honorable, and in some respects more honorable because of her subordinate position. Because of her dependent status she has prior claim on her husband's care and protection.

10. Cause. That is, on account of God's expressed purpose in the creation of woman and His plain command regarding her position in relation to her husband, she should comply with the accepted custom that women wear a veil in public (see Gen. 2:18; 3:16; 1 Cor. 14:34; Eph. 5:22–24; 1 Tim. 2:11, 12; Titus 2:5; 1 Peter 3:1, 5, 6).

Power. Gr. *exousia*, "authority." This probably refers to the sign of the husband's authority, the veil, which women wore as a public recognition of their position under the power of their husbands. Willing compliance with this custom was an honorable privilege, indicating that a woman had a position of respect in the community, for she "belonged" to someone, and could claim support and protection from him under whose "power" she lived.

Because of the angels. This phrase has been variously understood. Among the fanciful interpretations are the following: (1) that the angels represent presiding elders or bishops in the church; (2) that the angels represent the spies who were supposed to be present at gatherings of Christians, and who would spread unfavorable reports if women were seen unveiled in such gatherings; (3) that the angels represent evil angels who would be tempted by the beauty of unveiled women. The simplest explanation seems to be that Paul refers to the good angels who are present at public religious exercises and before whom women should conduct themselves with proper decorum. Angels, who have an exalted understanding of the majesty and greatness of God, veil their faces in awe when they speak His name (see GW 178). Not only would any manifestation of irreverence or disrespect in Christian assemblies for worship be insulting to the Creator, it would also offend the angels. It is the pleasure of angels to honor God and do His bidding, with glad acknowledgement of His worthiness and glory (Ps. 103:20; cf. Isa. 6:2, 3; Rev. 4:8). Human beings need to have a much greater sense of the holiness and greatness of God, approaching Him with reverence, and doing all things in strict accordance with His revealed will (see Ps. 29:1, 2). If women should comply with accepted custom concerning the wearing of the sign of their subordinate position for fear

of offending the angels, should they not the more fear to give offense to Him to whom all creatures, even the angels, are in subjection?

11. Nevertheless. In vs. 11, 12 Paul guards against a possible misunderstanding of what he has said in vs. 7–10. All attempts of men to exalt themselves over women, and all disposition on the part of women to retire are to be avoided. In the Christian life the sexes are mutually dependent on each other. In asserting the supremacy of man, and the manner in which such supremacy is to be indicated, even in public worship, Paul did not mean that man is independent of woman. Man and woman are counterparts of each other. The church is not a church of males alone, but of females also, who together with males are members of Him in whom “is neither male nor female” (Gal. 3:28). Neither man nor woman stands alone; both stand essentially together and depend on each other. This interdependence of one upon the other is cited lest man should take to himself too much superiority, and regarding woman as made solely for his pleasure, treat her as being inferior, and not entitled to due respect.

In the Lord. This relation of the sexes to each other is according to the design and direction of the Lord. It is God’s intention and command that they should be mutually dependent, and should consider and promote each other’s welfare and happiness. Each is necessary to the well-being of the other, and this fact should be recognized in all their association. Man cannot exist apart from woman, neither can woman exist apart from man, each is incomplete without the other. This fact should be sufficient cause to prevent boasting on the part of man.

12. Of the man. This is a reference to the origin of woman, taken from the side of man to be his helper, his companion, his equal (see Gen. 2:18, 21, 22). Before the fatal departure from obedience to God’s requirements, which resulted in the degradation of the whole earth, it was the plan of God that woman should be on a complete equality with man, but sin made necessary a change in that plan, and woman was placed in subordination to man (see Gen. 3:16; PP 46, 58, 59).

By the woman. The first man, Adam, came into being by a direct act of creation on the part of God, in which woman played no part, but every subsequent male human being has been dependent upon a woman for his entrance into the world. God has chosen to use this method for the reproduction of the race. That fact ought to cause men to regard with awe and reverence the process of human reproduction, in which both man and woman are used by God to bring into existence another being upon whom the Lord may lavish His affection, and who may have the opportunity to qualify to be numbered among those who receive the gift of eternal life (see Gen. 1:28; 9:1, 7; John 3:16; 1 John 5:11; 2 Tim. 4:8).

Of God. Everything in the universe was created and planned by God and exists for His pleasure (see Isa. 43:7; Rev. 4:11). Sin has interfered with God’s original plan, and man has lost the beauty and perfection of form and character that he received at his creation (see Gen. 1:26, 27; PP 64, 65). The plan of salvation seeks to restore man to his original perfection (Micah 4:8; PP 68). Knowing that God’s hand is over all, and that He is working out His purpose in the world, both men and women should repress any tendency to give way to an expression of complaint or dissatisfaction with the way God has arranged matters. Woman, recognizing the guiding hand of God, and acknowledging His wisdom and love, will be content with the position assigned her by God. In return, man will humbly confess that the present imperfect condition of things on earth is the result of sin, and will not assume any pose of false superiority. Both will understand that

God is the source of all things, of the existence of woman from man, and man through woman. Such intelligent and willing acceptance of God's ordained plan will help husband and wife to attain to that ideal of an indissoluble union that is illustrated by the union of Christ and the church (see Gen. 2:24; Eph. 5:22, 33).

13. *Yourselves.* Having discussed the divine plan concerning the relation of the sexes, as far as headship is concerned, Paul takes up again the question of the correctness or incorrectness of women taking part in public worship without a veil. The believers are here called to consult their own inner convictions without reference to any external authorities by which their ideas might be influenced.

Comely. Gr. *prepon*, "fitting," "becoming," "proper." For women to be uncovered when taking part in public worship does not fit in with the solemnity of the occasion, if for no other reason than that, because of the custom of the country, it distracts the attention of other worshipers. Furthermore, it would create a wrong impression on the mind of a pagan who might witness the service.

14. *Nature.* Here meaning the usual order of things, that which is generally accepted by men, the prevailing custom. In the time of Paul it was customary for Jewish, Greek, and Roman males to wear short hair. Among the Israelites it was looked upon as disgraceful for a man to have long hair, with the exception of one who had taken a vow as a Nazirite (see Num. 6:1–5; Judges 13:5; 16:17; 1 Sam. 1:11; see on Num. 6:2).

15. *Glory.* Paul reasons that nature (see on v. 14) leads people to recognize that long hair is an ornament and adorning for woman, as short hair is becoming for men.

Covering. Gr. *peribolaion*, literally, "that which is thrown around." Paul does not mean that the woman with long hair may dispense with the veil. Verse 6 shows clearly that the uncovered woman still has long hair, which Paul declares may as well be cut if she desires to dispense with the veil. He seems to contend that the long hair itself argues for the propriety of the veil.

16. *Seem to be.* Rather, "desires to be."

Contentious. Gr. *philoneikos*, "fond of strife." After all that had been said on the subject, it was possible that there still might be someone in the Corinthian church who felt that he had a right to object to the instruction that women ought to be veiled, and might wish to impose his teaching on the church contrary to the counsel Paul had given. Such a person ought to realize that God is leading His church as a whole, He is not leading separate individuals, and personal opinion is to be surrendered to the voice of the church as the body of believers moves in accordance with the inspired instructions of the Lord (see TM 30, 476; 5T 534, 535; 4T 239, 256, 257; 9T 257, 258). This does not rule out the advisability of private, personal, individual study and investigation of truth. On the contrary, believers are urged to "search the scriptures," and to equip themselves to bear testimony for truth. But if anyone forms an opinion that is not in harmony with the Bible, he should relinquish it, well knowing that there cannot be light in any belief or idea that conflicts with the Word of God (see Isa. 8:20; John 5:39; 2 Tim. 2:15).

We. That is, the apostles, the divinely appointed leaders of the church.

No such custom. The apostles neither taught nor followed the practice of sanctioning the appearance of women in public worship unveiled. The fact that in Christian churches elsewhere, in Judea particularly, the women did not take part in the services with uncovered heads should have decided the matter for the women of Corinth. Failure to

comply with the generally accepted rule in the churches elsewhere would be a source of misunderstanding and offense. The opinion and conduct of the large body of believers was to be respected, and not opposed by a few self-opinionated members of the church at Corinth. This principle is always true; one individual or a few individuals should not feel that their ideas are superior to the general opinion of the church whole, and seek to impose those ideas on the majority, irrespective of the teachings of Scripture and the accepted practice of the church (see Acts 15:5, 6, 22–29; 9T 260, 261).

17. This. The pronoun refers to what follows, namely, the correct conduct of the sacred ordinance of the Lord's Supper.

Praise you not. In view of their obstinate attitude and their failure to maintain proper decorum in worship, especially with regard to the manner of observing the Lord's Supper, Paul could not speak to them words of commendation. The strife in the church indicated the presence there of a group who wished to assert a greater degree of liberty than that which was possible within the area of the provisions God had made for His people. Contending for the preservation of personal opinion, which often has its roots in pride, savors of the spirit of Satan, who caused war in heaven in order to try to prove that he was right and God was wrong (see Isa. 14:12–15; Rev. 12:7–10).

Not for the better. The regular assemblies of the believers are intended to minister to spiritual uplift and to encourage those participating to face the battle of life with greater faith and hope. Far from commending their deportment and their observance of the ordinance of the Lord's house, the apostle found it necessary to rebuke them. He first stated categorically that their meetings were not productive of good results, but of bad; then he proceeded to elaborate on that statement and show how they had permitted erroneous practices to deprive the communion service of its sacredness and inspiration.

18. First. Paul had already dealt with quarrels and factions in the church at Corinth that had arisen from differences at Corinth that had risen from differences of belief and practice (see ch. 1:10–12). Here he may be referring to the habit of congregating in several separate groups to celebrate the Lord's Supper. This separation into cliques is the first thing to be reproved. In chs. 12; 14 he deals with the second matter that needs correction, namely, a misunderstanding as to the nature and purpose of the various spiritual gifts.

Church. Gr. *ekklēsia*, “gathering together,” “assembly.” *Ekklēsia* does not mean a building, as the word “church” so often does in English, but the church members.

I hear. Literally, “I am hearing,” or “I continue hearing.” Paul was doubtless receiving repeated reports. Paul had a great burden of soul for the churches that he had been instrumental in establishing, and anything that disturbed their orderly functioning was a cause of distress to him (see Gal. 3:1; 4:19; cf. Phil. 1:7, 8; Col. 1:24).

Divisions. Gr. *schismata* (see on ch. 1:10). The spirit of unity and harmony that should prevail in gatherings of the saints, was absent (see above under “first”).

Partly. The criticism of their behavior in this respect was somewhat softened by this expression, which would indicate that Paul had too high a regard for them to give full credit to everything that had been reported to him about their factious condition.

19. Heresies. Gr. *haireseis*, singular *hairesis*. Originally *hairesis* meant “choosing,” “choice,” then “that which is chosen,” “opinion.” Later it came to signify a group of people holding to a particular opinion, a sect, a party. Here the word is probably used, not

in a bad sense, as referring to opinions. When a number of individuals of various backgrounds associate closely in Christian fellowship, there will of necessity be varying degrees of appreciation of truth. These different degrees of understanding of the principles of the gospel give rise to discussion. Discussions may have wholesome effects and need not lead to divisions.

They which are approved. That is, those who are willing to obey God and to cooperate with Him. Divisions in the church have the effect of revealing those who are restless, ambitious, and dissatisfied, those who are not willing to be led by the Holy Spirit, but who seek to do their own will, and are not prepared to abandon their own opinions for the sake of peace and harmony in the church. Individuals of this type are to be avoided (see on Rom. 16:17). On the other hand, there are those who recognize their own natural sinfulness and who are unwilling to place any confidence in their own opinions, realizing the danger of being influenced by the impulses, desires, and inclinations of unconverted flesh. Such church members declare themselves to be in favor of peaceful and happy compliance with all the instruction of God (see Rom. 8:14; Gal. 5:16, 17, 19–26). During the world-shaking events that will usher in the close of earth's history, when all men will be required to demonstrate their allegiance, many whose fidelity to truth has passed almost unnoticed will then shine like brilliant stars on a dark night (see 5T 80, 81).

Made manifest. The presence in the Corinthian church of some who were out of harmony with the mind of Christ, necessitated bringing into the open differences of belief that would stimulate believers to earnest search for a knowledge of God's will, and that would lead to a disclosure of those who refused to be led by the Holy Spirit (see Luke 2:34, 35; 1 John 2:18, 19). Thus the presence of doctrinal differences, and various opinions relative to correct methods of procedure in the church, served as a means of sifting the church and separating the chaff from the wheat.

20. Come together. That is, for the celebration of the Lord's Supper.

Not to eat. That is, whatever the intention may be, it is not possible under the circumstances to observe the sacred communion service. They came together for a supper, to be sure, but it was not the Lord's Supper. This was not due to any lack of facilities, but to lack of the necessary spiritual atmosphere and the lack of spiritual discernment that would be conducive to sympathetic appreciation of the significance of the ordinance. The Corinthians were not to think that such practices as were permitted among them at such times were consistent with the celebration of the supper. Greediness, selfishness, and intemperance are wholly at variance with the spirit of Him who left the joys of heaven to give all that He had for the salvation of sinners (see 1 Cor. 11:21, 22; John 3:16; Phil. 2:6–8).

Lord's supper. Gr. *kuriakon deipnon*, literally, "a supper pertaining to the Lord," which may mean a supper consecrated to the Lord or one instituted by Him, or both. The early Christians customarily preceded the Lord's Supper by what they called a love feast, or *agapē*. Thus the entire proceeding formed a commemoration of the last Passover feast, at which Christ instituted the ordinance of the Lord's Supper (see Matt. 26:17–21, 26–28; 1 Cor. 11:23–26). The love feast was a meal to which each member made a contribution of food that was enjoyed in common with all the other believers, to demonstrate clearly the fellowship of love in the Christian church, a fellowship that knows no caste or class distinctions, that places on all the same level. This meal, followed by the Lord's Supper,

showed that all shared in the provisions God makes for His people, both material and spiritual, and that there is no partiality manifested toward any. This custom continued in the church to the end of the 4th century, when, on account of the growth of the church and the increased size of the congregations, it was found necessary to separate the love feasts from the Lord's Supper. See p. 45.

21. *Own supper.* Owing to the divisions and factions that had developed within the church at Corinth, the spirit of love and brotherly fellowship that characterizes all true followers of Jesus had to some extent disappeared. This unfortunate condition was revealed at the celebration of the feast that was supposed to be the Lord's Supper, by each participant bringing his own food and eating it himself, without any thought of sharing it with others. The rich had an abundance to eat, and the poor often had nothing. The supper that had been instituted to commemorate the supreme demonstration of love thus became a mere private feast, a proceeding without meaning or significance, which each one might as well have performed at home. This brought the sacred ordinance of the Lord's Supper into disrepute. The schisms in the church were largely responsible for this state of affairs, and it is possible that members of different parties ate separately because of their pride, refusing to humble themselves by fellowship around the Lord's table.

Hungry. The poor believer, trusting in the charity of his more fortunate brethren, came to the feast believing that his need would be provided, but he was disappointed by the selfishness and unchristian pride of the rich.

Drunken. Gr. *methuō*, "to be intoxicated." This word refers definitely to inordinate use of intoxicants to the point of loss of self-control. Paul intimates that the Corinthians ate and drank to excess at these feasts, and as a result their professed celebration of the Lord's Supper became merely a farcical rite.

It may be considered surprising that Christians who lived in apostolic days, and who had been taught by Paul himself, should so pervert the nature and purpose of the Lord's Supper as to turn it into a copy of their former heathen entertainments. It must be remembered that the Corinthians had only recently abandoned heathenism. They had been accustomed to engaging in excessive feasting in honor of false gods, and it would be comparatively easy for them to imagine that the Lord's Supper could be celebrated in a similar manner. The divisions and party strife that marred their spiritual experience would cloud their vision and make it easier for them to corrupt the observance of the ordinance. This experience of the Corinthian believers shows that new Christians need careful and prolonged instruction and wise, sympathetic leadership and supervision until they are firmly rooted in the fundamental truths of the gospel. Compromise with non-Christian beliefs and practices always results in departure from the purity and simplicity of the gospel (see Deut. 7:1–4; 18:9–14; 2 Cor. 6:14–17).

22. *Have ye not houses?* If they assembled only to partake of their individually provided food and drink, they might well do that in their own homes, and so avoid bringing disgrace on the cause of God.

Despise. Do you think so little of the general practice of the whole body of believers in all places that you will set aside principle in order to satisfy your pride in your factions, and to gratify your selfish appetites?

Have not. That is, the destitute ones whose poverty was emphasized by the unfeeling manner in which many of the church members acted at the communion services. Failure to provide for the poor on such occasions not only drew attention to their unfortunate

condition, but also revealed the fact that those who acted in that manner were wholly unprepared to partake in the ordinance.

That believers should so far lose sight of the sacred, exalted nature of the Lord's Supper as to permit jealousy, envy, gluttony, pride, and neglect of the poor to have a place in their thinking and acting, merited the most severe rebuke. Such things showed clearly that those who acted in that way were absolutely devoid of the spirit of Jesus, who loves all impartially and who has tender regard for the unfortunate members of His flock (see Lev. 19:10; Ps. 41:1; 72:4; 132:15; Prov. 14:21; Isa. 14:32; 58:7; Matt. 26:11; Luke 14:13; James 2:5). To show contempt for the poor, and pass them by on account of their lack of the material blessings of life, is looked on by the Lord as ill-treatment of Him. Those who thus treat the poor show their utter misconception of the principles of the kingdom of God (see Matt. 25:40–46; 2T 24–29, 34–37). Ministry to the poor, sick, and aged is Christianity in action.

Praise you not. However he might seek for it, there was not one thing that the apostle could commend in their manner of observing the ordinance. On the contrary, there was much ground for unqualified censure. The situation called for the exposition of the purpose of the Lord's Supper, which follows in vs. 23–30.

23. Received of the Lord. Paul was not one of those present when Christ instituted the Lord's Supper. Nevertheless he had learned of it, not merely from other apostles or by tradition, but directly from the Saviour Himself, during one of the revelations given to him by the Lord (see 2 Cor. 12:7; Gal. 1:12).

Delivered. Paul had faithfully delivered to them what the Lord had revealed to him as to the manner in which the Lord's Supper was to be observed. In view of this lack of perception of the real import of the ordinance, which produced the present abuses, Paul set forth the solemn circumstances in which it was first observed by Jesus and His disciples in the upper room at Jerusalem (see Luke 22:13, 14).

Betrayed. Literally, "was being betrayed." The plot for Christ's betrayal was in progress, and had not yet been fulfilled. At the very time Jesus was giving instructions for the memorial ordinance of His death to be observed, His enemies were putting into operation their plan to seize Him. The solemnity and pathos of the holy supper stood in sharp contrast with the careless and flippant attitude of the Corinthians at their love feast. The night of His betrayal confronted Christ with one of the bitterest experiences that mortals can endure. Persecution and trial at the hands of avowed enemies are hard to bear, but they do not inflict the same mental pain that treachery or desertion on the part of friends brings to a trusting heart (see Job 19:21; Ps. 38:11; Zech. 13:6; John 13:21, 26, 27, 30; DA 655). By reminding the Corinthian church of the events of that night of suffering, Paul no doubt sought to impress them with a sense of the solemn nature of the ordinance, and thus teach them that it was altogether improper for them to celebrate it with gluttony, drunkenness, and proud exclusiveness. To appreciate the deep significance of the ordinance, it is necessary to meditate upon the events clustering around its institution; and one of those events, the memory of which is calculated to produce in the mind a feeling of sympathy for the Saviour, was His betrayal by one who had professed to be a friend (see Ps. 41:9).

Took bread. The bread that had been prepared for the Passover supper (see on Matt. 26:26).

24. Had given thanks. Gr. *eucharisteō*, “to give thanks,” from which the word “Eucharist” is derived. The term “Eucharist” is applied by some theologians to the Lord’s Supper as a sacrifice of thanksgiving for all the gifts of God. Some of the Fathers of the church in the 2d century applied the word to the bread and wine used in the ordinance. In the account of the institution of the ordinance given by Mark, the word *eulogeō*, “to praise,” or “to bless,” is used; in Matthew textual evidence (cf. p. 10) favors the reading *eulogeō*, but in Luke *eucharisteō* is employed as here (see Matt. 26:26; Mark 14:22; Luke 22:19). Both words have similar meaning and in the context convey the idea of consecrating the bread by a grateful acknowledgment of God’s mercy and love.

He brake. Jesus meaningfully broke that which was to be from that time forward “till he come” (v. 26) the mysterious symbol of all that His substitutionary sufferings mean to the human race. The act of breaking the bread indicated primarily the suffering that He was about to undergo on our behalf.

This is my body. As to the meaning of this figure of speech see on Matt. 26:26. The spiritual significance of the act of partaking of the broken bread must be understood against the background of man’s original state of perfection, his fall, and his redemption through Jesus Christ. Man was originally created in the image of God, both in form and in character; his mind was in harmony with the mind of God (see Gen. 1:26, 27; PP 45). He held open communion with God and the angels and was sustained by the fruit of the tree of life (see Gen. 2:15, 16; PP 47, 50). But when he sinned, all this was changed. He lost the privilege of open communion with God; instead of being in harmony with the mind of God, he was perverted in mind, and fear took the place of love (see Gen. 3:8, 10, 12; Isa. 59:2; Jer. 17:9). Left to himself, man could not find his way back to God and happiness, he could not escape the clutches of Satan, and was doomed to perish eternally (see Jer. 13:23; PP 62). In His incomprehensible mercy God revealed Himself to man in the person of His Son, and made possible the restoration of His image in man (see Ps. 2:7, 12; 40:7; John 14:9–11; 2 Cor. 5:19).

In His wisdom the Father has chosen to speak to mankind through His Son, therefore the Son is called the Word of God (see John 1:1–3, 14; DA 19, 22, 23). It is by the study and assimilation of the Word of God that believers maintain communion with Heaven and are enabled to live spiritually. This assimilation of His words is described by Jesus as eating His body and drinking His blood (see John 6:47, 48, 51, 54–58, 63; DA 660, 661). The broken bread of the communion supper signifies the wonderful truth that as man derives his physical life from God, who is the source of life, so the repentant, believing sinner derives spiritual life from Jesus, the Word of God. Physical food is provided for all men by the power and grace of God. The physical food taken into the body is changed by the processes of digestion into the tissues of brain, muscle, nerve, and bone; and actually becomes man himself. Thus man, physically, is what he eats. In like manner he who by study takes into his mind the Word of God, and brings his life into conformity with it by the power of God, is changed from a rebel, continually living in opposition to God and therefore to his own best interests, to a loving, obedient child of God, whose whole purpose in life is to reflect the image of his Creator (see DA 660). This precious experience has been made possible for man only by the breaking of the body of Jesus.

Is broken. Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 10) the omission of this verb.

In remembrance of me. This phrase shows that Christ would be absent when His disciples ate of this supper in the future. In order to impress upon men the awful nature of disobedience, God had required of the Hebrews animal sacrifices. But these sacrifices could not, of themselves, change the character of the sinner who made the sacrifice; they could only point him to the Redeemer to come, who would, in His own body, make the great sacrifice whereby man might be reconciled to God. The Lord's Supper, which succeeded the Passover memorial of deliverance from Egypt, was given, not as a sacrifice, but vividly to remind the believer of all that has been achieved for him by the one great sacrifice made by the Son of God for the whole human family (see Heb. 9:25–28; 10:3–12, 14).

The sacrifice of Christ was perfect; therefore it could be offered only once. But in order to make it efficacious for all who should seek forgiveness of sin through Him, Jesus became man's great high priest in heaven after His ascension, there to present the merits of the sacrifice of His own broken body on behalf of repentant sinners "till he come" (1 Cor. 11:26; Heb. 4:14–16; 7:24, 25; 8:1, 6; 9:11, 12, 14, 24). As the Saviour ministers on our behalf in heaven, pleading before the Father the merits of His sacrifice, He calls upon His people on earth to observe the ordinance that keeps before them the mystery of the atonement.

25. Same manner. That is, with the same solemnity and purpose, and to teach the same great truth. These words also indicate that the Lord gave thanks before inviting the disciples to drink the wine (see Matt. 26:27; Mark 14:23; Luke 22:17).

When he had supped. It is impossible to determine at what point in the Passover ritual the new ordinance was introduced (see on John 13:2). It was to be an entirely new ordinance, not a continuance of the paschal feast, the significance of which came to an end when Christ died.

This cup. By a figure of speech the container stands for its contents. The cup contained the Passover wine "untouched by fermentation" (see on Matt. 26:27).

Testament. Gr. *diathēkē*, "a covenant," "an agreement," "an arrangement." Here *diathēkē* refers to the agreement God has made with man, whereby, on account of the reconciliation effected by means of the sacrificial death of Christ, God would give everlasting life to all who believe in Christ (see John 3:16, 36; 5:24; 1 John 5:12). That this arrangement for the salvation of man was in effect before Jesus came to the earth is clearly evident, for Abraham, among others, was saved by faith in the promised Redeemer (Rom. 4:3, 16–22; Heb. 11:39, 40). How then could this be called a new covenant? It was not "new" in point of time, but in point of the time of its ratification by the blood of Christ. For the relationship between the old and the new covenant see on Eze. 16:60.

In my blood. It was customary in OT times to ratify, or seal, agreements made between two parties by the slaying of an animal. In some instances the animal was cut in pieces and the parties to the covenant walked between the divided animal, thus signifying their vow of faithfulness to the terms of the covenant (Gen. 15:9–18; Jer. 34:18, 19). The old covenant between God and Israel was confirmed by the blood of animals (Ex. 24:3–8). The new covenant between God and man, based entirely on God's promises, was ratified by the blood of Jesus (see Heb. 10:12, 14, 16, 20; PP 371). The sinner who repents and accepts the divine plan for his redemption thereby enters into the new

covenant. And he testifies to his grateful acceptance of this plan by drinking the communion wine, which speaks of the blood of Christ that ratified the covenant.

As oft. The time and frequency for the observance of the Passover had been definitely prescribed by God (Ex. 12:1–20), but not so for the Lord’s Supper. The frequency of its celebration is left to the choice of the believers. It is natural to think that those who love the Lord, and are conscious of their great need of Him at all times, will be glad to partake in the ordinance often.

In remembrance of me. It is essential that the great fact of Calvary, with all its implications, be never absent from the thinking of all who value eternal life. The study of the science of salvation will occupy the attention of the redeemed throughout eternity. True Christians will desire to give much consideration to this exhaustless theme while waiting for their Lord to come again (see Ed 126; DA 659).

26. As often as. See on v. 25.

Shew. Gr. *kataggello*, “to proclaim,” “to declare.” By taking part in the ordinance of the Lord’s Supper, Christians proclaim to the world their faith in the atoning work of Christ and in His second coming. The Saviour’s words, “when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom” (Matt. 26:29), encourage His followers to look forward through trial and hardship to the glorious day when He will return to take His people away from this world of sin to the abode of everlasting happiness and peace (see DA 659). This statement concerning showing, or proclaiming, the Lord’s death suggests that the ordinance should not be observed in secret. Its public observance often makes a deep impression on those who witness it.

It should be obvious from this verse that all believers are to eat the bread and drink the wine at the communion service. Neither element is partaken of only by the one officiating. It is by eating and drinking the emblematic bread and wine that believers declare their faith in the full reconciliation effected by the broken body and shed blood of Christ, and in His return to this world to take His people to Himself (John 14:1–3). The ordinance is to be observed as long as time shall last, by all who are believers. The need for its observance will cease only when all believers see Jesus face to face. Then there will be no necessity for anything to remind them of Him, for all will see Him as He is (1 John 3:2; Rev. 22:4). As the sacrifices offered at the tabernacle in Moses’ day, and later at the Temple in Jerusalem, pointed to the death of Jesus all through the centuries until Christ came the first time, so the celebration of the Lord’s Supper declares that He has paid the penalty for the sins of mankind, and will continue to declared it “till he come” the second time.

27. Wherefore. That is, in view of what has been said concerning the purpose of the Lord’s Supper.

And. Rather, “or.”

Unworthily. That is, without due reverence for the Lord, whose suffering and sacrifice are being commemorated. The unworthiness may be said to consist either in unbecoming conduct (see v. 21) or in a lack of vital, active faith in the atoning sacrifice of Christ.

Guilty. One who fails to appreciate the incalculable debt he owes to the Saviour, and who treats with indifference the ordinance appointed to keep fresh in the minds of believers the death of Christ, is guilty of disrespect toward Him. Such an attitude is akin to that of those who condemned and crucified the Lord. One who displays such an

attitude at the Lord's Supper might well be considered as rejecting his Lord, and therefore sharing in the guilt of those who put Him to death.

28. Examine himself. Before taking part in the Lord's Supper the believer should prayerfully and carefully review his experience as a Christian, and make certain that he is ready to receive the blessings that participation in this ordinance provides for all who are in right relationship with God. He may well ask himself whether day by day he has an experience of death to sin and new birth to the Lord, whether he is gaining in the battle against besetting sins, and whether his attitude toward other men is right. Words, thoughts, and deeds should be inspected, as well as habits of personal devotion; indeed, everything that has a bearing on progress toward the attainment of a character that reflects the image of Jesus (see 2 Cor. 13:5; Gal. 6:4). Whereas self-examination and the putting away of everything that is contrary to the mind of God is an exercise in which the Christian must engage every day (see Luke 9:23; 1 Cor. 15:31; 7T 252), the Lord's Supper represents a special occasion for public declaration of new resolves. For the function of the ordinance of foot washing in aiding the believer to attain to the requisite experience of preparedness see on John 13:4–17.

So. After having made a careful scrutiny of his life in relationship to the Lord, let the believer approach the table of the Lord with joyful thankfulness for all that the crucified Saviour means to him.

29. Unworthily. Important textual evidence may be cited (cf. p. 10) for omitting this word. If omitted, the sense of the passage is, "For the one eating and drinking not discerning the body."

Damnation. Gr. *krima*, "judgment," not necessarily the future and final punishment of the wicked. By improper participation in the Lord's Supper one is exposed to the displeasure of God and to punishment, such as that mentioned in vs. 30, 32.

Discerning. Gr. *diakrinō*, "to distinguish," "to discriminate." Here the meaning may be that the Corinthians did not distinguish between an ordinary meal and the consecrated emblems of the ordinance, that they placed no difference between their regular food and that which had been set apart to remind them of the atoning death of Christ. There is a great difference between memorials of ordinary events in history and the memorial of the transaction by which restoration of the sinner to divine favor became possible. Believers must not treat the ordinance as merely a commemorative ceremony of a happening in history. It is that, and much more; it is a reminder of what sin has cost God and what man owes to the Saviour. It is also a means of keeping fresh in mind the believer's duty to bear public witness to his faith in the atoning death of the Son of God (see DA 656).

30. Weak and sickly. Commentators generally believe that these adjectives describe physical disease and suffering. It may be that the intemperance and gluttony associated with the love feasts that preceded the ordinance at Corinth were contributing factors to the sickness spoken of here. Sin is disobedience, and produces suffering and death.

Sleep. Gr. *koimaomai*, a word frequently used in the Scriptures to signify death (John 11:11, 12; Acts 7:60; 1 Cor. 7:39; 15:51; 1 Thess. 4:13–15). Drunkenness and gluttony bring their own reward, which is sickness and death. The heathenish intemperance manifested by the Corinthian believers at their love feasts may have been of such a nature as to merit this warning, but it is applicable to all instances of like excess. This, however, is not the only application of the statement. It cannot be separated from the matter of

careless observance of the Lord's Supper itself. One who, by a careless manner of conduct at the ordinance, shows a lack of respect for the sufferings of Christ, misses the blessings God desires him to have. He is likely to be careless about other commands of God, and so bring upon himself disease and suffering and even death.

31. Judge. Gr. *diakrinō* "to discern," "to discriminate." *Diakrinō* is translated "discerning" in v. 29. The word signifies self-judgment, a diagnosis of one's own moral condition in the light of God's standard. If believers would scrutinize strictly their own attitudes and conduct and take part in the ordinance with a proper reverence, they would not come under the condemnation of God.

Be judged. That is, by God. A proper self-examination would save believers from divine judgment. The experience of the Corinthian believers is recorded for our learning. If Christians would remember this experience of the early church at Corinth, and be scrupulous about examining their thoughts and feelings and motives, they would derive much greater blessing from partaking of the ordinance, and would avoid meriting the displeasure of God.

32. Judged. The sufferings that the Lord permitted to come upon the Corinthians because of their careless celebration of the ordinance were a merciful means of dealing with their failures. The disciplining was intended to save them from continuing in such transgression. It is better for us to be "chastened of the Lord" in this life, and be led to change our way from that which is not according to His will to that which He approves of, than to continue in sin and be lost eternally (see 1 Cor. 5:5; 1 Tim. 1:20). Suffering results in refining and purifying the life of the true believer (see Heb. 12:5–11).

Condemned with the world. This refers to the final condemnatory judgment, from which there is no reprieve. The "world" comprises all who refuse to repent of their sins, to humble themselves before God, and to accept Jesus as their Saviour. These are accounted worthy of eternal death (see Ps. 34:16; Eze. 18:24; Mal. 4:1, 2; 2 Thess. 1:8, 9).

33. Tarry. Two opinions are current concerning this verse, both of which seem to be appropriate. Some commentators think that it refers to proper behavior at the love feasts that preceded the Lord's Supper (see p. 45) in the church at Corinth. Others think that it refers strictly to the ordinance itself. In either case the caution is against the disorder and selfishness that had been practiced. Some had been drunk, some had neglected the poor. All this was contrary to the spirit of Christ (see vs. 21, 22). God requires order and a heavenly spirit in everything that pertains to His worship (see ch. 14:33, 40). At the most solemn service of the church, the Lord's Supper, there must be no trace of pride, selfishness, gluttony, or intemperance; the mind must be set upon Christ and His sacrifice, and no thoughts or acts prompted by the natural heart must be allowed a place therein.

34. Hunger. This refers to ordinary physical desire for food, not to spiritual longing for the bread of life. The Lord's Supper is not intended to be a time when men may satisfy their natural hunger. It is designed to be a memorial of the world's greatest and most solemn event, and not a banquet. If all believers would follow carefully the instructions concerning the observance of the Lord's Supper that are given in this chapter, it would be a service full of comfort and of elevating, holy joy (see DA 660, 661).

The rest. Apparently there were other matters on which questions had been raised by the believers in Corinth, questions that Paul felt he could deal with better when he came.

This statement shows that he planned to visit Corinth again, which he did, but not before he wrote another epistle (see pp. 102–104, 822).

This chapter stresses the need for exercising great care in all that is connected with the worship of God. Worshipers should approach Him with pure motives and consciences, and with minds intent on glorifying Him and receiving the blessing He waits to bestow (see Ps. 24:3–5; 29:2; 95:2, 3, 6; 100:4; John 4:23, 24).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

- 1 PP 719
- 3 DA 414
- 7 Ed 20
- 23–26 DA 652; EW 101, 217
- 24 Ev 273
- 26 DA 149, 659
- 27–29 DA 656
- 31 DA 314

CHAPTER 12

1 *Spiritual gifts 4 are divers, 7 yet all profit withal. 8 And to that end are diversely bestowed: 12 that by the like proportion, as the members of a natural body tend all to the 16 mutual decency, 22 service, and 26 succour of the same body; 27 so we should do one for another, to make up the mystical body of Christ.*

1. Now concerning. This chapter marks the beginning of a new subject, which continues through ch. 14. The subject is spiritual gifts, concerning which there was doubtless considerable misunderstanding. It is also clear that there was some abuse of the gifts, as well as unfortunate rivalry between possessors of various gifts.

Spiritual gifts. The word “gifts” is supplied, but correctly, as the context seems clearly to indicate. These gifts were provided for the church in a special way when Jesus ascended to heaven (Eph. 4:8, 11). They were intended to operate for the purpose of bringing the church into unity and a fit condition to meet the Lord (see Eph. 4:12–15). It would appear that the Corinthian believers has asked a question concerning the relative greatness of these gifts of the Spirit, and that some of them had been boasting that the gifts they had were greater and more important than those granted to other members (see 1 Cor. 12:18–23). Paul took the opportunity thus presented him, to give them instruction in the subject of the work of the Spirit in Christ’s mystical body, His church. The Holy Spirit of God has been in the church from the beginning (see AA 37, 53; PP 593, 594; COL 218). Hence the gifts of the Spirit were not confined to NT times. This is evident from the fact that many prophets existed in ancient times. It is God’s will and plan that His church shall be empowered by gifts till the end of time (Eph. 4:8, 11–13; AA 54, 55). The gifts are all from God; therefore there can be no possible ground for the human agent to boast over his fellows because he has been favored of Heaven as an instrument for the manifestation of the power of God in a special way for the benefit of the church as a whole (see 1 Cor. 12:11).

It should be noted that the gifts of the Spirit are not the same as the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22, 23). The former comprise endowments of divine power upon individuals in the church for the accomplishment of God’s purpose in bringing about the perfection of His church. The fruits of the Spirit are qualities of character that appear in church members who surrender themselves wholly to the guidance of the Holy Spirit and are

actuated by the supreme attribute of the Spirit, which is love (see 1 Cor. 13:13; Gal. 5:22, 23; AA 388; COL 68, 69; 5T 169; 4T 355).

Ignorant. Paul was anxious that the Corinthians should be under no delusions regarding the true nature of the spiritual gifts, and the right use of these gifts in the church. The need for a clarification of this subject doubtless arose from the fact that the Corinthians had but recently separated from heathenism (see v. 2). In that state they had been without knowledge of the revelation of the true God, and of the influence of the Holy Spirit. They were thus unqualified to form correct opinions concerning these new experiences, unless they were carefully instructed and accepted that instruction without reserve. The power that once influenced them had been broken when they accepted the Saviour, and the power of God had been specially confirmed in them by the gifts of the Spirit.

2. That. The sense of this verse seems to be clearer in the RV, which reads, “that when ye were Gentiles ye were led away unto those dumb idols, howsoever ye might be led.”

Gentiles. Gr. *ethnē*. This term was used to designate all who were not Jews, but it also has acquired the meaning, “heathen,” in Christian thinking. That seems to be the significance it has here. The idea is that the Corinthians had been pagans, worshipers of idols, without any knowledge of the true God, and given over to idolatrous superstitions. The powers that were leading them astray were the powers of darkness, those evil spirits that were represented by the false gods they had worshiped (see ch. 10:20). If they only realized the advantages that had come to them since they accepted Christianity, they would appreciate their present condition as followers of Christ. This reference to their former heathen state is used by Paul in other places to stimulate Christians to be grateful for the mercies shown to them by God through the gospel (see Rom. 6:17; Eph. 2:11, 12; Titus 3:3).

Carried away. This expression shows that they were not able to control themselves, they were irresistibly drawn to the worship of idols by a power outside of themselves—a power that no doubt worked upon their passions and appetites to delude them into the belief that they were receiving benefits from their idolatrous observances, while in reality they were being ruined thereby.

Dumb. The idols to whose altars and temples they were drawn, whether to worship, sacrifice, or consult, are called voiceless, or “dumb,” in contrast with the living God, who has revealed Himself in His Word, and who imparts to His followers spiritual gifts that enable them to speak in His name. The Lord often draws attention to this voicelessness of the false gods of the heathen as an argument against the folly of worshiping them (Ps. 115:4, 5; 135:15–17; Hab. 2:18, 19). Any supernatural manifestations or utterances came, therefore, from demon powers and not from the idols or the gods represented thereby.

3. Wherefore. In order that they might form a correct opinion concerning the working of the Holy Spirit on the hearts of men, and particularly in connection with utterances alleged to come from that source, Paul gave them a rule by which they might distinguish the false from the true.

Accursed. Gr. *anathema*, “devoted to destruction” (see on Rom. 9:3). Here a simple rule is given whereby it may be known whether one who claims to be under the influence of the Holy Spirit is really being led by God. One who is actuated by the Holy Spirit would not speak of Christ as being accursed, or deserving of destruction. It is

inconceivable that any man inspired by the Holy Spirit would ever speak in a derogatory manner of Jesus, much less call Him a man who is cursed and set apart for destruction. Any such utterance is sufficient proof that the one who voices it, whatever his claims may be, is definitely not influenced by the Holy Spirit. The Spirit of God would always, and under all circumstances, give honor to Christ, and would prompt anyone under His influence to love and reverence the name of Christ (see 1 John 4:1–3).

Jesus is the Lord. Anyone not influenced by the Spirit of God would not acknowledge that Jesus is the divine Son of God. This does not deny the possibility of words being uttered that would seem to recognize Christ as Lord or Saviour, apart from the influence of the Holy Spirit, for that has been done in mockery by evil men. But genuine heart confession of Jesus as Lord comes only from the lips of one who is led by the Spirit (cf. Matt. 16:16, 17). Those who truly honor the name and work of Jesus prove that they are influenced by the Holy Spirit. No man will ever cherish real regard for Christ, nor love His name and work, unless he is led by the Spirit to perceive the divine nature of the Saviour. No one can show his love for the name and work of Jesus by following the inclinations and promptings of his own unregenerate heart. In every instance where an individual is brought to accept Christ, it is through the agency of the Spirit of God. Conversely, one who is inclined to speak lightly of Jesus, or disparage His work in any way, or teach doctrines contrary to His Word, proves by so doing that he is not led of the Spirit (see DA 412). The presence of the Holy Spirit should be prayed for and cherished. To grieve away the Holy Spirit by refusing to follow His leading is to drive all true knowledge of the Saviour from the heart. This results in coldness, darkness, and finally spiritual death (see Eph. 4:30; DA 587, 588).

4. *Gifts.* Gr. *charismata*, literally, “gifts of grace.” Here the word refers to the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Spirit dwelling and working in a special manner in individuals. The diversities of gifts are enumerated in vs. 8–11.

Same Spirit. The different modes of operation of the gifts are all produced and controlled by the Holy Spirit. These various methods of working of the gifts are mentioned in vs. 8–11. Paul’s point of emphasis in referring to these different endowments is to show the Corinthians that since they are all produced by the same Spirit, and all have the same origin and purpose, therefore none are to be despised or belittled. No man, because of the reception of a certain gift of the Spirit, is to look with contempt upon any other believer because he is not so favored. The disposition of the gifts by God is to be accepted gratefully, and due recognition given to the One who dispenses these powers, and not to the recipient as being in any way superior to his fellows.

5. *Administrations.* Gr. *diakonai*, “ministrations,” “services” (see Rom. 15:31). The word is often translated “ministry” (see Acts 1:17, 25; 6:4; 20:24; Rom. 12:7; 1:12). There are different kinds of services in the church, but all are controlled by one Lord.

Lord. In the NT this term standing by itself generally refers to Christ. It is one of the names by which He was known among the disciples (John 20:25). The purpose of this verse seems to be to establish the fact that all the various forms of ministry in the church originated with Christ. Because of this, and because all the kinds of ministrations are necessary, no individual should be unduly proud of his particular appointment to a responsible position in the church; nor should anyone feel disappointed because he has been assigned to a humble post of duty (cf. Matt. 23:8; 1 Peter 5:2, 3).

6. Operations. Gr. *energēmata*, “workings,” from *energeō*, “to be at work,” “to be in action,” “to operate.” Our word “energy” comes from this root. In the NT, *energēmata*, occurs only here and in v. 10. The word probably refers to the divine energizings operating in the church and perhaps in all nature.

Same God. Having introduced the Spirit and the Son in vs. 4, 5, Paul here completes his mention of the three persons of the Godhead by referring to the Father as the originator and sustainer of all the manifold endowments and workings of the spiritual powers that He has provided for the effectual accomplishment of the work of His church. There are various “gifts,” “administrations,” and “operations,” but all proceed from one God, one Lord, one Spirit, that is, from Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

7. Manifestation of the Spirit. This may be understood either as a manifestation that the Spirit gives or as a manifestation that reveals the Holy Spirit in His true nature and operations. The meaning is not too different. The reference is to spiritual gifts, which were manifestations produced by the Spirit, and at the same time manifestations that revealed the character and work of the Spirit.

To every man. That is, every Christian. It appears that the gifts in the early church were widely if not universally distributed among the various members. However, the phrase “to every man” may simply mean, to every man to whom a special gift is given.

To profit withal. That is, for the common good or advantage of the church as a whole, though personal benefit is not excluded (see ch. 14:4, 12). The gifts are imparted according to the needs of the church in special situations. In the wisdom of God the church at Corinth received a liberal endowment of gifts (ch. 1:7). The supernatural manifestations confirmed the faith of the early believers, who had not the historical evidence of the power of Christianity that men possess today. Nor had they trained and experienced leadership or men skilled in the Word of God. Bibles, consisting of only the OT, were rare. To supply the lack and to meet the need, supernatural gifts were liberally bestowed.

8. Word of wisdom. That is, the utterance of wisdom. A man possessed of this gift was not only wise, he was able also to explain his wisdom to others. For a definition of wisdom and for the contrast between wisdom and knowledge see on Prov. 1:2.

Word of knowledge. That is, utterance of knowledge. Knowledge, generally speaking, is man’s ability to apprehend facts. In relation to the gospel it would be his ability to apprehend spiritual truth and arrange it in an orderly manner for presentation to others. This apprehension of truth comes from the study of the Scriptures, or directly from God by inspiration. The “word of knowledge” is therefore the power to discourse on those truths, presenting them in proper order to the minds of the hearers so that they would be convinced of what they hear.

9. Faith. The faith here spoken of is not that which all Christians possess. It is a special kind of faith such as enables its possessor to do exceptional exploits for God (see Matt. 17:20; 21:21; 1 Cor. 13:2).

Gifts of healing. Special powers are here indicated such as those exercised by the apostles (Mark 16:18; Acts 3:2–8; 14:8–10; etc.). It is, of course, the privilege of all to request healing for the sick and to receive answers to prayer. But this is to be distinguished from the “gifts of healing” here spoken of. It appears that those with this gift possessed divine knowledge and direction in their work, and healed only those whom God directed them to heal. They thus possessed certain knowledge of the outcome.

10. Working of miracles. As in the case of “gifts of healing” (see on v. 9) this was a special gift performed under divine direction. However, it is the privilege of those not possessing the gift to pray for miraculous intervention and to have their prayers answered if God so chooses.

Prophecy. This is the power to speak authoritatively for God, or on God’s behalf, either by foretelling future events or by declaring God’s will for the present (see Ex. 3:10, 14, 15; Deut. 18:15, 18; 2 Sam. 23:2; Matt. 11:9, 10; 2 Peter 1:21). Prophecy is the means chosen by God to establish communication between Himself and man (see Num. 12:6; Amos 3:7). The whole Bible has come to men by means of this gift (see 2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20, 21). Scriptures testify of Jesus, and the gift of prophecy is appropriately called the “testimony of Jesus” (Rev. 19:10; see John 5:39; Rev. 12:17). Visions, dreams, special divine illumination of mind, are ways in which this gift of prophecy works (see Num. 12:6; Rev. 1:1–3). Thus the human agent becomes the mouthpiece of God (see 2 Sam. 23:2; Matt. 3:3; 2 Peter 1:21). God intended that this important gift of the Spirit should be with His church to the end of time (see Joel 2:28, 29; Rev. 12:17; 19:10). In fact, it is to be a mark of identification of God’s true church in the last days (Rev. 12:17; 19:10). This is only reasonable, because God has been using this channel through which to reveal Himself and impart His messages to the world ever since the fall of Adam.

Discerning of spirits. This is the ability to distinguish between divine and counterfeit inspiration (see 1 John 4:1–3; TM 228, 229). Christ warned His church that false prophets would arise, particularly in the last days, and all should be on the alert to recognize and reject such false teachers (see Matt. 24:4, 5, 11, 23–25). The apostles in the early church had the ability to distinguish between true and false preachers and professors of Christianity (see Acts 5:1–10; 13:9–11). There was need for this gift in the early days of the church, when there were doubtless many pretenders to possession of these gifts. Satan has ever been ready to counterfeit the true, and often supports the false claims of pretenders by supernatural miracles (2 Thess. 2:9; Rev. 13:13, 14).

Kinds of tongues. This gift is discussed at length in ch. 14, where it is contrasted with the gift of prophecy.

Interpretation of tongues. A special gift was needed to interpret the messages imparted (see ch. 14:27, 28; Additional Note on Chapter 14).

11. Selfsame Spirit. All the various endowments of power supplied to the church are imparted by the Holy Spirit, who works in and through the believers. Since God controls the working of the gifts of the Spirit, it is safe to conclude that they must all be in perfect harmony with His overall plan for the finishing of His work on earth. The knowledge that all the gifts come from God should be enough to forbid any display of pride in their possession.

Every man. See on v. 7. Similarly today, all who surrender to Christ and become members of His church on earth, no matter what their nationality or social or economic status or intellectual attainments, have the assurance that the Holy Spirit will equip them with ability to perform their Christian duties with a high degree of effectiveness (see DA 823).

As he will. The Holy Spirit distributes His gifts to believers in accordance with His knowledge of their capacities and the needs existing in the experience of each individual. It is not an arbitrary division, but one based on supreme knowledge and understanding. The great objective of preparing the church to meet God without spot or fault at the

coming of Christ is the controlling factor in the distribution of the gifts (see Eph. 4:12, 13; 5:27; Rev. 14:5). This statement that the gifts are imparted to each one as the Holy Spirit sees most needful is a source of encouragement to believers. It assures them that they will receive exactly the ability and strength that they need in order to live godly lives and in order to witness powerfully under whatever circumstances they may be placed.

The personality of the Holy Spirit is revealed in this verse, for the acts of distributing gifts to men as He sees best for their own and the church's interests, relate definitely to a person. The Spirit's sovereignty is also proved here, because He distributes the gifts entirely as He pleases.

12. The body is one. The human body is one organism, but it is composed of various members and parts, each having its own indispensable function, and all uniting harmoniously in one whole. Though the different parts of the body are separate and distinct in their shape, size, and functions, they are all essential, and all unite in making up the entire body, and are all under the same guiding power, the head.

Christ. The apostle represents the church as the body of Christ, signifying that it is one united body, with Christ as its head (see 1 Cor. 12:27; Eph. 1:22, 23; Col. 1:18–24). By a figure of speech a part is here made to represent the whole. Christ, the head of the church, stands for the entire church. All the members of the church are separate individuals, having varying offices and responsibilities in the church. For these tasks they receive gifts from God appropriate to their individual needs, but they all are answerable to Christ and are united in Him.

13. Baptized into one body. The baptism here referred to is doubtless that which accompanies baptism by water in the case of every truly newborn child of God (see Matt. 3:11). Water baptism is valueless unless the one being baptized has been born again by the Holy Spirit (John 3:5, 6, 8). It is through the work of the Holy Spirit that men become members of the body of Christ.

Jews or Gentiles. Whatever may have been a man's former condition of life, or whatever his nationality, surrender to Christ and baptism by His Spirit removes all former differences between him and other believers, for all are on the same level in the sight of God. It is not nationality that counts, but humble acceptance of Jesus as Saviour, and willingness to let Him lead at all times.

Bond or free. Or, "slaves and freedmen." Compare Gal. 3:28; Col. 3:11. The fact that there were many nationalities and social classes comprising the body of Christ, heightens the idea of diversity. Yet in spite of diversity there is unity.

Into one Spirit. Textual evidence attests (cf. p. 10) the omission of the preposition "into." Without it the phrase reads, "of one Spirit." The reference is probably to the work of the Holy Spirit at the time of baptism, including the bestowal of the gifts. Some commentators refer this phrase "all made to drink" to the common participation in the cup at the Lord's Supper, by which action believers showed that they all belonged to the same body, the church of God, and were all united in heart. However, the form of the verb translated "made to drink" is such as to refer the action of drinking to a definite time in the past, rather than to repeated participations in the ordinance of the Lord's Supper.

14. Body. In vs. 14–26 Paul presents the idea that the unity of organization includes rather than excludes, a plurality of membership. He illustrates this by the organization of the human body, a system in which every part has its necessary duty. No part of the body can be satisfactorily dispensed with if the body is to continue to function efficiently. The

different members are introduced as holding a discussion of this problem in a very dramatic style.

One member. The body is composed of various members, which have many offices to perform. A similar variety is to be expected in the church, and it is not to be presumed that all will be alike, or that any member God has placed there will be useless. It is not merely a multiplicity of parts that the body needs, nor a mere multiplicity of persons that a church requires. In both cases that which is required is a full complement of members unitedly performing all necessary functions for the good of the whole. The human body has no place or need for inactive members that do not make a contribution to the general efficiency of the whole organism; similarly the church needs consecrated, active members who continually make their contribution to the efficient performance of the work of the church in winning souls for the kingdom of God (see 4T 590; 5T 456, 457; 6T 434, 435).

15. *I am not of the body.* No member of the body can justifiably say that because it is not another part having possibly a larger place in the affairs of the body, it is not needed, and so is not an essential part of the body. In a similar manner no member of the mystical body of Christ can say that because he does not fill a certain position he is useless, and bears no essential relation to the church. The lowliest member of the church is as much a member of the body of Christ as the most highly endowed (see Matt. 23:8–12; James 3:1; 1 Peter 5:3). All members are dear to Christ. He gave His life for all. He would have died for one soul (see Luke 15:4–7; DA 480; 8T 73).

16. *Ear.* The argument is the same as in v. 15 (see comment there).

17. *Eye.* If all church members had the same gift or gifts, and all were fitted for the same office or type of service, important phases of church activity in proclaiming the gospel would be neglected and the church would decline in spirituality and strength. Each part must make its proper contribution to the well-being of the body, otherwise maximum efficiency cannot be maintained.

Smelling. There is no body sense that can be spared if the best enjoyment of life is to be secured. The sense of smell may be considered by some to be of less importance than that of hearing or seeing, but it does not take much reflection to realize that an individual who lacks the sense of smell is exposed to many risks that others can avoid by their ability to detect dangerous materials through the olfactory nerve. God does not do anything for His church that is not beneficial. His plans for her are good and not evil (see Jer. 29:11; Eph. 5:27). All the varied spiritual endowments that He has provided for the growth and upbuilding of the church have their important parts to perform, and not one can be omitted without loss. Every member should be so conscious of his great debt to the Lord, and so fully submissive to His will, that he will delight to accept whatever place is assigned to him in the service of the church.

18. *Hath God set.* In His wisdom God has appointed to the various parts of the body their different functions. Man has no control over this arrangement; it is entirely ordered by God. In a similar way He appointed different individuals in Corinth to do various kinds of work. Each was selected according to the wisdom of God, and endowed with a gift that enabled him to discharge the responsibilities placed upon him (see vs. 27, 28). The gifts were distributed by God; man had no part in apportioning them (see on v. 11). In complaining and objecting to his place and work in the church, a member may find himself rebelling against God.

19. All one member. There was apparently a spirit of discontent on the part of some in Corinth with the way God had distributed the gifts. Those who did not hold prominent offices in the church seemed to be disgruntled, feeling that if they were not ministers or teachers they were of no account. By an effective illustration from the human body Paul sought to dispel these false ideas, pointing to the absurdity that would result if all parts of the human body were fused into one particular member, such as the eye or the ear.

Body. For the hands, feet, eyes, ears, etc., to perform their allotted service they must be united in the body; not one of them can function if that union is broken. If all the strength of the body were to be channeled into one particular member such as the eye, all other parts would suffer, and the eye itself would become useless. Thus Paul emphasizes that any interference with the Creator's plan for the orderly operation of the body is not beneficial, but harmful, in its results.

20. But now. Peace and happiness are found in gladly accepting God's plan for His creatures and His church.

One body. Unity in diversity, and diversity in unity, is the arrangement that produces the best results (see Eze. 1:28; 10; 5T 751; GW 489). God's hand is over all, and the individual Christian can rejoice that he is considered worthy of a part, be it ever so small, in the grand work of bringing to a glorious close the plan of redemption.

21. No need. This verse rebukes the pride of those who felt more highly gifted. They are shown that their conceit, which made them feel that the lesser gifts could be dispensed with, is wrong. There is mutual dependence of the various departments of church life upon one another for proper functioning of the whole. The most gifted church members are as much dependent on the less favored as the latter are on the former. This being the case, there is no place at all for pride or discontent in the church. Each part of the body has its own peculiar duty to perform, and the failure of one part affects the efficiency of all the others. So the contribution of the apparently most insignificant office in the church is important for the effective operation and harmonious development of the entire organization.

Instead of pride and discontent, brethren should manifest love and sympathy for one another. Those who appear to be more generously gifted should cherish their less favored brethren and let them know that they appreciate what they are doing for the cause that is loved by all members of the body of Christ (see 5T 279). Let all believers remember that the love and unity seen among Christians is God's own appointed means of informing the world that He sent His Son into the world (see John 17:21).

22. Seem to be more feeble. It is not certain which members of the body Paul is referring to. Perhaps there is an allusion to certain parts of the body that appear to be structurally weaker than others and need to be protected.

Necessary. A man may continue to live if he loses a hand, a leg, an eye, or an ear, but he cannot get along without the heart, lungs, or brain. So although these members appear to be more feeble and require a protective covering, they are actually of more vital importance, and therefore more useful, than the apparently substantial members, such as arms or legs.

23. Less honourable. Paul does not specifically identify these members. They are doubtless those that are normally clothed. The distinction between these and the "uncomely parts" seems to be one of degree, the latter probably referring to the sex organs and organs of excretion. It is customary to leave the face exposed, unadorned with

clothing of any kind, so with the hands; but there are certain parts of the body that modesty, decency, and propriety demand shall be concealed. The origin of this practice of covering certain portions of the body is found in the record of man's fall. Prior to the entrance of sin into the human family our first parents were covered with a robe of glory, but sin caused that to be removed, and Adam and Eve, seeing their naked state, sought to cover themselves (see Gen. 2:25; 3:7, 10, 11; PP 45, 57). God expects His people to clothe themselves adequately, and to make sure that the requirements of Christian modesty and purity are fully met.

Abundant honour. The face, which is left uncovered, is considered to be naturally comely, whereas other parts of the body are attractively clothed. This seems to teach that those members of the church less endowed with spiritual gifts than are others, should not be despised or treated with condescension. The lesser gifts in the church should not be lightly esteemed, but should be treated with greater consideration and care, because they are indispensable to the whole body.

24. No need. The first sentence of v. 24 may most naturally be connected with v. 23 as in the RV, RSV, etc. The face, hands, etc., are left uncovered, and their exposure does not involve any embarrassment or disgrace. Likewise the more gifted members of the church do not need the same amount of guidance and spiritual instruction as do those who are not so greatly favored with gifts.

Tempered ... together. Gr. *sugkerannumi*, literally, "to mix together." The word is found only here and in Heb. 4:2. Here the word probably means to bring together in orderly arrangement. The RSV reads, "adjusted." God has made one part of the body dependent on another and necessary to the proper action of the other. All work together in a harmonious unity.

More abundant honour. In the sense of requiring more attention and care. A man must work and produce the goods that will enable him to make the needed garments to adequately clothe these parts.

25. Schism. Gr. *schisma* (see on ch. 1:10). The different talents and gifts possessed by various members of the church should not be a reason for the formation of parties within the church. None should be made to feel that they are not fit to belong to the society of others who have what might be regarded as superior gifts. There seems to be a reference here to the divisions that had developed in the church at Corinth (see chs. 1:10–12; 11:18). All the parts of the human body are necessary, and dependent on one another. No part is to be considered as needless for the welfare of the whole body. So with the church. No member, however feeble, unlearned, or obscure, should be thought unnecessary or valueless. Each one is needed in his place, and it is not right to think that they belong to different bodies and cannot therefore associate together.

Same care. No matter which part of the human body may be affected by pain or sickness, the resources and energies of the whole body are concentrated on relieving that pain and restoring the injured member to a normal state. Likewise, in the spiritual body every member should be interested in promoting the interests of his fellow members without respect of person or gift.

26. Suffer. When injury comes to one member of the body, the whole body is caused to suffer, because of the natural, vital connection between the injured member and the rest of the body. So with the church; there should be such close and living connection among the members that the suffering of one is communicated to the entire church, and

the interest and active help of all is enlisted to help the suffering member. If one is suffering through poverty, for example, it is the responsibility of the church to relieve that suffering by ministry to his material needs; if one is persecuted for his faith, the whole body of believers should share his trial and rally round him to give what support they can (see Rom. 12:13, 15, 16; Gal. 6:2; 7T 292). The church is a closely knit organization; in it is to be seen unity that is likened to that between the members of the Godhead (John 17:21, 23; Rom. 12:4, 5). Christ identifies Himself with His people, and when one of them suffers He feels the pain (Matt. 25:40, 45; Acts 9:5). As in the natural body a sting in a finger is felt right up the arm and through the body, so in the spiritual body, when one of Satan's poisoned darts pierces the heart of one member, the whole church is affected. The whole body is disgraced by the defection of the least member.

Honoured. The health of one member of the body is reflected in the well-being of the entire body. So in the church. The honor that comes to one of its members by special endowment is shared by all, for all are benefited by his special endowments.

27. Ye. The pronoun is emphatic in the Greek. Paul was addressing the Corinthian believers, among whom were some who had caused divisions in the church, and others who had not fully severed their connection with idolatry, and still others who had lapsed into immorality (see chs. 1:10, 11; 3:3; 5:1, 2; 8:1). They should take care to be sound, healthy members, doing their proper part in the work of the church. They should be faithful and loyal to Christ and to one another, not envious of any of the brethren.

Body of Christ. Compare Eph. 1:22, 23; 4:4, 12, 16; 5:23, 30; Col. 1:18, 24; 2:19; 3:15. Church members are to be subject to the will of Christ in all things, even as all the various parts of the body are directed by the will of the head; and as all members of the body maintain living connection with the head and with one another, so believers will sustain to each other the relationship of members of the same body, all subject to the same head, Christ.

In particular. Gr. *ek merous*, literally, "out of part," here meaning "individually," or "severally." The idea is that each individual member has his own responsibility to serve God in his own place and according to his own function. This appears to be enlarged upon in vs. 28–31, where the various functions of individual church members are described in accordance with the different gifts imparted by the Holy Spirit.

28. God hath set. Literally, "God hath set for Himself." In v. 11 the Holy Spirit is represented as dispensing the gifts; here it is God. The members of the Godhead work together in unity.

Some. Paul means, some apostles, some prophets, etc.

First. Doubtless first not only in point of time (see Matt. 10:1–8; DA 290, 291) but also in rank, as being one of the most important offices in the church.

Apostles. Literally, "ones sent forth." The term must not be limited to the Twelve. Others, too, were called apostles (see 1 Cor. 15:7; Gal. 1:19). The apostles seem to have had general jurisdiction over the churches.

Prophets. See on v. 10.

Teachers. Those endowed with special ability to expound the Scriptures. They are probably the same as those possessing the "word of knowledge," who know how to unfold the mysteries of the kingdom of God to inquiring minds (v. 8). Preaching and teaching are closely allied; the preacher proclaims truth in a way that reaches the heart of the hearer and incites him to action in favor of what he has heard; the teacher takes truth

and analyzes and synthesizes it with such clarity and logic that those who listen truly understand the message. They are thus enabled to give a reason for the hope that has been implanted in their hearts by the preacher.

Miracles. The working of miracles was one of the more spectacular gifts of the Spirit. Miracles played a definite part in Christ's ministry on earth, and He gave to His disciples the power to work miracles (see Matt. 10:8; DA 350, 351; EW 189). It was His plan that His followers should have power to perform miracles to advance His work on earth (see Mark 16:15–18; DA 823). See on 1 Cor. 12:10.

Healings. See on v. 9.

Helps. Gr. *antilēpsis*, derived from a verb meaning, literally, “to lay hold of.” The word occurs only here in the NT, but is frequent in the papyri, with the idea of “assistance,” “succor.” This gift is generally understood to be the ability conferred on those who perform the office of a deacon in the church, particularly as that office calls for ministering to the needs of the poor and the sick. This is a work that may not be given as much publicity as some of the other gifts, but it is nonetheless an important phase of church life. To be able to visit the sick and give them real sympathetic, understanding help, both physically and spiritually, is a powerful means of turning hearts to the Saviour. Caring for the poor and needy by relieving their material lack can be done satisfactorily only by those who are led by the Spirit. This is a most fruitful ministry (see Isa. 58:7; 5T 612, 613; 6T 282, 306, 307; MH 147, 148).

Governments. Gr. *kubernēseis*, derived from a verb meaning “to steer,” “to act as a helmsman,” hence, “to guide,” “to govern.” *Kubernēseis* probably refers to the gifts of administration in the church.

Tongues. For a definition of this gift see on ch. 14; see Additional Note on Chapter 14.

29. Are all apostles? The form of the question in Greek shows that a negative answer is expected. Verses 29, 30 show that God does not bestow any single gift to every believer. They are apportioned according to the need of the particular situation confronting the church at any place and time. It is also to be borne in mind that the gifts are not for the glorification and exaltation of man, but for the accomplishment of the plans and purposes of God, who imparts these powers to His people as He pleases, and not according to man's ideas and opinions (see vs. 4, 5, 11). Not all believers at Corinth were qualified by the Holy Spirit to perform the duties of any one particular office in the church, such as that of teacher or prophet, but distribution of gifts was made by the Holy Spirit to such individuals as He chose to use for certain specific purposes. This should remove from the recipients of the gifts all pride and all ideas of superiority over their less favored brethren.

30. Gifts. This verse continues the argument of v. 29 (see comment there).

31. Coveth earnestly. Gr. *zēloō*, “to be zealous for.” The Corinthians are admonished to keep on earnestly beseeching the Lord to pour out His Spirit upon them and to impart to them gifts that are most necessary for the performance of their part in His work. The initial endowment with a gift or gifts is not necessarily the final endowment. As in the parable of the Talents (see on Matt. 25:14–30) faithfulness to duty may lead to increased endowments.

Best. Gr. *kreittona*, “better,” though the comparative may stand for the superlative “best.” However, textual evidence favors (cf. p. 10) the reading “higher.” Spiritual gifts are imparted by the Holy Spirit for the building up of the church to a state of perfection and unity in Christ (see Eph. 4:12, 13). Doubtless those that deal directly with the main purpose of the church, namely, the preaching of the gospel, and that contribute most to the general edification (see 1 Cor. 14:1) are considered to be of primary importance.

More excellent way. That is, the way of love described in ch. 13.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

4 CT 314; Ev 98; 3T 446
 4–12AA 92; TM 29
 6 9T 145
 7 COL 364
 8, 9 9T 144
 8–11COL 327; ML 37
 11 CT 315; DA 823
 12 FE 413, 466
 12–277T 174
 13 MH 25
 13–21AA 317
 14–214T 128; 5T 279; 6T 288; WM 123
 24–27AA 318
 26 7T 292
 26, 27 WM 23
 27 5T 731; 7T 296; 8T 174
 28 AA 92; 3T 446

CHAPTER 13

6

1 *All gifts, 2, 3 how excellent soever, are nothing worth without charity. 4 The praises thereof, and 13 prelation before hope and faith.*

1. Though. Paul has enumerated and defined the place of the gifts of the Spirit in the church (ch. 12). Now he proceeds to show that the possession of all these gifts, and other additional qualities, does not make one a Christian if he does not possess the supreme gift of love. This beautiful prose poem has been called the “greatest, strongest, deepest thing Paul ever wrote” (Harnack).

The nature, worth, and eternal duration of love in comparison with the temporary gifts is here set forth. This chapter continues the discussion of the subject introduced in ch. 12, namely, spiritual gifts. Paul has noted the fact that the various spiritual endowments were conferred in such a way as to advance the building up and welfare of the church (see ch. 12:4–28). Now he shows that possession of the gifts mentioned therein, good though it is, can be superseded by an endowment that is more valuable than anything previously described, and that the gift is available to all (cf. Gal. 5:22).

⁶Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment*. Commentary Reference Series (1 Co 11:1). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.

Tongues of men. This may be a reference to the power of utterance that is found in the most highly qualified and gifted orators among men, or to the many different languages used by the nations of this earth. If the speaker lacks love, one of the basic characteristics of God, his superior eloquence or his facility in the use of languages is as valueless for the promotion of the kingdom of God as the meaningless noises of any resonant piece of brass or vainly clanging cymbal (see 1 John 4:8; DA 22; GC 487, 493).

Of angels. By this Paul may have referred either to the gift of tongues so highly prized in Corinth (see on ch. 14) or to the elevated language of angels. However, the highly spectacular manifestation of tongues or even the ability to speak with angelic tongue does not confer any honor on the one who receives it, nor is it of any real value to him if it is not associated with love. The apostle designed to correct the wrong evaluation the Corinthians placed upon the gift of tongues and to stimulate them to seek for love as the most valuable endowment.

Charity. Gr. *agapē*, “love,” the higher type of love, which recognizes something of value in the person or object that is loved; love that is based on principle, not on emotion; love that grows out of respect for the admirable qualities of its object. This love is that which is seen between the Father and Jesus (see John 15:10; 17:26); it is the redeeming love of the Godhead for lost humanity (see John 15:9; 1 John 3:1; 4:9, 16); it is the special quality demonstrated in the dealings of Christians with one another (see John 13:34, 35; 15:12–14); it is used to signify the believer’s relation to God (see 1 John 2:5; 4:12; 5:3). Love for God is shown by conformity with His will; this is proof of love (see John 2:4, 5). See Additional Note on Psalm 36; see on Matt. 5:43, 44.

The word “charity” is not comprehensive enough to indicate the wide sweep of interest in the well-being of others that is contained in the word *agapē*. Indeed “charity” may convey a highly restricted idea of welfare aid. The word “love” is better, but that must be understood in the light of all that is said in this chapter concerning it. This “love” (*agapē*) must not be confused with that which is sometimes called love, a quality composed largely of feeling and emotion that has the center in self and the desires of self. *Agapē* centers the interest and concern in others and leads to appropriate action.

The Corinthian church had been greatly troubled with internal discord resulting in divisions and parties (see ch. 1:11, 12). Some boasted of their superior qualifications and gifts (see chs. 3:3–5, 8, 18, 19, 21; 4:6, 7). This chapter shows that possession of various gifts of the Spirit avails nothing if the individual is devoid of love.

Brass. Gr. *chalkos*, “brass,” or anything made of brass. Here, modified by “sounding,” it probably refers to a gong or a trumpet. The idea is that of a resounding instrument, one that makes a loud noise and gives an appearance of great importance but is merely a lifeless emitter of sound.

Tinkling. Gr. *alalazō*, an onomatopoeic word, originally formed to express the loud yell uttered by an army when rushing into battle. From this original use it came to mean the making of any loud noise, such as a shriek or a wail of lamentation. Here *alalazō* is used to describe monotonous, clanging sounds of a cymbal.

2. Prophecy. The apostle moves on to the more important, though possibly less sensational, gift of speaking as God’s inspired messenger, passing along instruction from Heaven to the church. The superiority of this gift over tongues and other spiritual gifts is

emphasized in ch. 14:1, 39. The prophet, who stands between God and men and reveals God's will to men, must be dominated by love, otherwise his messages will have little effect upon the hearers.

Mysteries. Gr. *mustēria* (see on Matt. 13:11; Rom. 11:25). Because of sin, man's powers of mind have become weakened; his capability of understanding the wonders of life, both natural and spiritual, is greatly inferior to that which God originally intended him to have (see Isa. 6:9, 10; John 12:37–40; 2 Cor. 4:4; 4T 585; 5T 698, 701). Long and arduous study and research are required to enable men to discover the secrets of nature, but these were readily acquired by Adam before he sinned (see PP 50, 51). The unconverted, sin-dominated mind cannot understand the things of God. This is because sin has wrought a complete change in man's spiritual nature, so that his ways are diametrically opposed to those of his Creator (see Isa. 55:8, 9). To the prophets God sees fit to reveal the workings of His will on behalf of men. In turn, they are commissioned to instruct men as to their relation to God and their fellow men (see Ps. 25:14; Amos 3:7).

Knowledge. By "knowledge" Paul doubtless refers, not to knowledge in general, but to the gift of knowledge described in ch. 12:8 as "the word of knowledge," meaning "the utterance of knowledge" (see comment there; cf. on ch. 12:28).

Faith. That is, the gift of faith described in ch. 12:9 (see comment there).

Charity. See on v. 1.

Nothing. Having listed the possible possession of the gifts of prophecy, wisdom, knowledge, and faith, outstanding and greatly desired spiritual endowments, Paul makes the simple statement that all these things, admirable and important though they may be, are ineffective without love.

The same is true also of acquired gifts, such as intellectual attainments. Satan has great intellectual power, and knowledge that exceeds that of men, but he is not elevated thereby (see 2T 171; PP 36; 5T 504). The mind that is not surrendered to Christ and actuated by His Spirit is under the control of Satan, who works in it to accomplish his own pleasure (see 5T 515). Thus it becomes apparent that mere intellectual attainments, separated from the Godlike quality of love, merely serve to aid the enemy in achieving his ends, and do nothing to further the spiritual interests of men (see 1 John 4:8). One who may have had much of this world's wisdom, together with a theoretical understanding of the relationship that should exist between man and God, and yet had no experimental knowledge of love, would still be lost. His efforts to do good to others would be fruitless, and the great goal that should be his in life, the glorification of God, would remain unreached (see John 4:7, 8; MB 37).

3. Bestow. Gr. *psōmizō*, "to feed by putting bits of food into the mouth," "to dole out," "to feed out in morsels"; used in the NT only here and in Rom. 12:20. Here the word may apply to the distribution of goods to the poor in small portions. It was probably customary in Paul's day for the wealthy to dole out alms to the poor at the gate of their property (see Luke 16:20, 21). Then, too, they probably distributed alms in small portions to many people so that there would be a larger number benefited and ready to praise the donor. Almsgiving was considered to be a great virtue, and was frequently done ostentatiously. Jesus severely reproved this desire for popular acclaim (see on Matt. 6:1–4). To emphasize the vanity of such false charity, Paul pointed out that if all that a man possessed was thus doled out and yet true love was absent from the life, it would all be empty hypocrisy and of no value spiritually. Though such behavior might result in good

to others, it could not meet with God's approval because the requisite character qualifications were lacking.

To be burned. Important textual evidence may also be cited (cf. p. 10) for the reading, "so that I might boast." With this reading the meaning of the passage is, "though I dole out all my possessions to feed the poor, and though I give over my body, in order that I might boast, it profiteth me nothing."

The idea of the KJV reading is that martyrdom that is sought for self-glorification has no merit. In Paul's day it was not customary to put men to death by burning; stoning, crucifixion, or beheading with the sword were the usual methods of execution. The question arises: Why, then, would Paul refer to martyrdom by burning? The answer is: Perhaps because burning represents one of the most painful forms of death. To give one's body to be burned would represent an extreme form of self-sacrifice. Some have regarded this passage as prophetic of the fearful torture by fire that befell the church in the time of Nero and later. They thus see in the passage a warning against the delusion that merit might be obtained by needlessly seeking martyrdom by fire.

Profiteth me nothing. If the one who suffers martyrdom by fire does not possess the character qualifications represented by "love" (*agapē*), he has no hope of eternal life, and consequently has lost everything. Love, therefore, is more precious and valuable than the gifts of the Spirit that the Corinthians desired to have (vs. 1, 2), or than singular acts of beneficence or self-sacrifice. Nothing can take the place of love. God accepts only the service of love (see John. 14:15, 21, 23; 15:9, 10, 12, 14; 1 John 4:11, 12, 16–21; 5:1–3).

4. Suffereth long. In vs. 4–7 Paul proceeds to analyze love. He points out seven excellent characteristics of love and eight acts and attitudes that are totally foreign to its nature. In this eulogy he sets forth the superior quality of love in both its positive and its negative aspect. The personification of love in these verses heightens the beauty of the description, for Paul ascribes to love those characteristics that are found in all who truly love. Throughout the paragraph occasional glimpses are seen of the faults in the church at Corinth that were in direct contrast to the excellent qualities of love.

Forbearance, or long-suffering, in a world where impatience and intolerance prevail, is a precious attribute. Love bears long with the faults, failings, and weaknesses of others. It recognizes that all human beings are fallible, and that, therefore, due allowance must be made for manifestations of the outworking of errors that result from man's inherently sinful nature. Long-suffering is opposed to haste, to passionate expressions and thoughts, and to irritability. This word denotes the state of mind that enables a man to be patiently quiet and to bear long when oppressed, wrongfully accused, and persecuted (see Eph. 4:2; Col. 3:12; 2 Tim. 4:2; 2 Peter 3:15; cf. Matt. 26:63; 27:12, 14; see on Matt. 5:10–12). He who is long-suffering possesses one of the fruits of the Spirit (see Gal. 5:22).

Is kind. Gr. *chrēsteuomai*, "to be gentle," "to exercise kindness," "to be considerate and mild." The word portrays the gracious nature of one who is actuated by the Spirit of God, one who is ever seeking to reveal by word and deed an understanding sympathy for, and appreciation of, the struggles and difficulties of others. The idea of the word is that under all circumstances of life, whether harsh and provoking, painful or sorrowful, love is mild and gentle. Love is the reverse of hatred, which manifests itself in severity, anger, harshness, unkindness, and revenge. A man who really loves another is kind to him, anxious to do him good, gentle and courteous, because he does not wish to hurt his feelings, but seeks to promote his happiness (see 1 Peter 3:8).

Envieth. Gr. *zēloō*, “to be zealous,” either in a good or bad sense; here in a bad sense, “to be envious,” that is, to exhibit wrong or unpleasant feelings toward others on account of advantages possessed by them. Such feelings give rise to strife and division, entirely contrary to the teachings of Jesus, for He exhorted men to love one another and live together in unity (see John 15:12; 17:22; 1 John 3:23). Envy, or jealousy, is one of the most cruel and contemptible of all human failings (see Prov. 27:4; Song of Sol. 8:6). Lucifer, the exalted angel who was privileged to be one of the covering cherubs by the throne of God, was overcome by envy and lost his high position (see Isa. 14:12–15; Eze. 28:14, 15). Since his fall, Satan has sought to implant his own dreadful vice of envy in the heart of every human being, so that all may be ruined, as he was. Only love can drive out jealousy. However, contentedness with what the Lord has permitted us to have does not debar us from desiring earnestly the best gifts and longing ardently for the “more excellent way” of love, which is described in this chapter (see 1 Cor. 12:31).

Vaunteth ... itself. Gr. *perpereuomai*, “to be vainglorious,” “to boast oneself.” Love does not sound its own praises; it is humble and does not try to exalt self. One in whose heart true love is found remembers the life and death of Jesus and instantly repels every thought or suggestion that would lead to self-glorification (see EW 112, 113). The love that is a gift of the Spirit looks upon every good thing as coming from God and bestowed by Him, and hence there is no ground for vain boasting because of possessing a certain gift from God.

Is ... puffed up. Gr. *phusioō*, “to puff up,” “to blow up,” “to inflate,” metaphorically, “to make proud.” *Phusioō* comes from *phusa*, “bellows.” Love does not inflate a person with vanity; it does not produce a condition of conceit and self-exaltation. This expression points to the subjective state of pride and self-satisfaction that so often mark those possessed of superior knowledge and abilities (see ch. 8:1). Love does not indulge in mental self-esteem, laying claim to having the best gifts, and in that way ministering to vainglory. Love does not produce ideas of self-importance, nor seek the flattery of others for anything that has been accomplished (see 5T 124).

5. Behave itself unseemly. Gr. *aschēmoneo*, “to act unbecomingly,” “to behave dishonorably.” In the LXX the word is used with the meaning, “to be naked” (see Eze. 16:7, 22; etc.). Love is never uncivil, rude, or unmannerly; it never behaves in such a way as to offend the sensibilities of others. Christ, when on earth, was ever mindful of the feelings of men, and He ever acted with courtesy and propriety toward all (see GW 121). Every true follower of the Lord will be courteous at all times, never responding to the promptings of the natural heart to repay rudeness and harshness with discourtesy (see GW 123). Love always searches for that which is right and proper or becoming in all the relations of life, because it seeks to promote the happiness of others, and that of necessity leads to avoidance of everything that would cause offense or interfere with true enjoyment.

There may be an allusion here to the improper conduct of some of the Corinthians in public worship and in relation to heathen feasts (see 1 Cor. 8:10–12; 11:4–6, 20–22). For the Christian, personal opinions, desires, and practices are supplanted by love in the interests of the comfort, convenience, and happiness of others.

The becoming behavior of love precludes all fanaticism and unbalanced positions that lead to unrestrained emotional outbursts and bring the cause of God into disrepute. This statement that love never behaves unseemly proves that it is under the control of reason at all times, and cannot be mere emotion or feeling. That which is simply a response to feeling and emotion, and falsely called love, does not act reasonably, nor does it necessarily consider the feelings and sensibilities of others.

Her own. Literally, “her own [things].” The exact opposite of the nature of real love is a selfish seeking after one’s own advantage, influence or honor as the great objective in life (see ch. 10:24, 33). Of all the characteristics of love, this is the hardest for the unsanctified heart to understand. Man naturally is interested first of all in himself, and frequently that interest overshadows all others; but Christ’s way, the way of love, puts self last and others first (see on Matt. 5:43–46; 7:12). Man’s selfish nature is one more proof that sin has completely reversed the divine order in the experience of humanity, leading men to concentrate their affections and interests on themselves (see Jer. 17:9; Rom. 7:14–18, 20; 8:5–8; James 4:4; see on Matt. 10:39). One possessed of the selfless love of God forgets self and is completely absorbed in doing the will of God. That is why he is willing to give his life in loving ministry for others (see Matt. 22:37–39; Acts 10:38; GW 112; 7T 9, 10).

Jesus “went about doing good” (Acts 10:38). From this statement it is clear that no one can be a real Christian, a real follower of Christ, who lives for himself alone or who makes it his principal object in life to promote his own interests. A Christian is one who follows Christ. Therefore he is one who denies the clamors of the natural heart for devotion to self, and who is willing to sacrifice his own comfort, time, ease, wealth, and talents to advance the welfare of mankind.

Easily provoked. The word “easily” is supplied, and apparently without warrant. It actually gives a wrong shade of meaning to the statement. Love is not provoked, whether easily or otherwise; nothing can disturb the equanimity of perfect love and cause a display of annoyance, impatience, or anger. To insert the word “easily” would be to suggest that there are times when a certain amount of anger, irritability, or resentment are permissible, but such is not the case with real love (see Ps. 119:165; Heb. 12:3; 1 Peter 2:23). The Christian who knows that self, the natural heart, is opposed to the will of God, and that having committed himself to the Lord, he is dead to sin, has no cause for irritation or annoyance. He simply turns everything over to God, knowing that whatever happens, he is under the watchful, loving eye of One who is controlling all things for his good (see Rom. 6:11; 8:28; 1 Peter 5:6, 7). One of the most striking effects of conversion is the remarkable change that is seen naturally the character of a person who was naturally irritable in disposition, resentful, and readily roused to anger. Under the influence of the Holy Spirit such a one becomes mild, gentle, and calm. All efforts of Satan to annoy him and make him give way to the old quick-tempered spirit are unavailing.

Thinketh no evil. Literally, “does not reckon the evil.” The Greek here conveys the idea of not taking into account the wrong that has been done; not reckoning, imputing, or charging the wrong to any man’s account. This is another beautiful, Christlike attribute of love. It shows that love puts the best possible construction on the behavior of others. One under the control of love is not censorious, disposed to find fault, or to impute wrong motives to others.

6. Iniquity. Gr. *adikia*, “unrighteousness.” Love finds no pleasure in any kind of unrighteousness, whether on the part of friend or foe. Unrighteousness, which is sin (see 1 John 5:17), is altogether foreign to the divine nature of love; therefore one who loves cannot be pleased with anything that is not in harmony with the will of God. Love does not rejoice over the vices of others or find happiness because others are found guilty of wrongdoing. It does not take malicious delight in hearing a report that someone has erred (see Prov. 10:12; 11:13; 17:9; 1 Peter 4:8). The unsanctified heart is glad when an enemy falls into sin, or when an opponent makes a mistake that involves him in disgrace, but not so with love. It takes the opposite course, and seeks to help even an enemy when he is in trouble (see Prov. 24:17; 25:21; Matt. 5:44; Rom. 12:20). Only those not sanctified by the truth find pleasure in the wrongdoing of others (see Rom. 1:32; 12:9).

Truth. Here “truth” stands in contrast with “iniquity” and means virtue, righteousness, goodness. Love finds pleasure, not in the vices, but in the virtues, of others. Love is interested in the advancement of truth and the happiness of man; therefore it is thankful whenever the cause of truth is sustained (see Mark 9:35–40; Phil. 1:14–18).

Love cannot find happiness in sin of any kind or in the punishment meted out to the sinner; rather, it finds pleasure in the liberation of man from the shackles of sin, because such liberation brings him into harmony with truth and makes him a candidate for the happiness of heaven, for which he was created (see Eze. 18:23, 32; 33:11; John 8:32; 17:17; 1 John 4:8; COL 290).

7. Beareth. Gr. *stegō*, “to cover closely,” “to protect by covering”; “to sustain,” “to support.” Love conceals and is silent about such things as the faults of others, which the selfishness of the natural heart would gladly expose. Love is not desirous of inspecting the weaknesses of others or of allowing them to be inspected by anyone else.

Believeth all things. This phrase does not mean that one who loves his fellow men is credulous to the point of absurdity, making no distinction between the things to be believed, and thus as likely to believe a falsehood as the truth. But love *is* disposed to put the best possible construction on the conduct of others, imputing good motives to them. This is the attitude of love, because love seeks to make others happy and will not believe anything to their detriment except on irrefutable evidence. In relation to God, love believes without question everything that is revealed of the will of God for man. There is no doubt concerning God’s Word and His instructions; all is gratefully accepted and obeyed.

Hopeth. However dark appearances may be, and whatever grounds there may be for questioning the sincerity of others, love still hopes that everything will be well in the end, and will maintain this position until all possibility of its being confirmed has disappeared. This faith in one’s neighbor, which love inspires, leads to the championing of his cause in the face of opposition. Love is based upon trust, and this trust rests ultimately in God; therefore love is willing to face ridicule, strife, and contempt in defense of others, hoping that in due time truth will be vindicated.

Endureth. Love suffers quietly all the difficulties, trials, persecutions, and injuries inflicted by man, and all the attacks that God may see fit to allow the adversary to make (see Job 13:15). This statement about love shows the infinite patience that is possessed by him who is always under the control of love. The strange behavior of others, perhaps calculated to hurt or annoy him, he patiently bears, for he sees in his fellow men souls for whom Christ died, souls that are misled by Satan, and therefore to be pitied and

helped rather than condemned or treated harshly. Being the perfect exposition of the law of God, love consistently works for the best interests of others, and consequently is prepared to look upon the unfavorable conduct of others with an understanding patience and sympathy inspired by God (see Matt. 22:37–40; Rom. 13:10; 1 John 4:7, 12, 16, 18, 20, 21).

8. *Fail*. Gr. *ekpiptō*, “to fall off [or “from”],” “to fall from its place,” “to fail,” “to perish.” Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 10) the reading *piptō*, the simple form of the verb. Genuine love does not fall off like a leaf or a flower (see James 1:11; 1 Peter 1:24). When a flower has given its fragrance and beauty during the hours of sunshine, it has served its purpose, and the cold winds and frosts cause it to wither and fall off the plant. Not so with love. In days of stress and strain, as well as when all is bright and fair, love ever remains the same, shedding its fragrance of trust and hope and faith all around. This must be so, for love is the very foundation of law, and the law of God is eternal (see Ps. 119:160; Matt. 5:17, 18; Luke 16:17). Every believer is enjoined to cultivate this fruit of the Spirit, and every believer may be assured that there can be no experience of life for which love does not make provision; love can be relied on at all times to solve all problems.

Prophecies. The gift of prophecy was provided by God for the guidance of the church through the ages (see Ps. 77:20; Hosea 12:13; Rev. 12:17; 19:10). When the need for such guidance no longer exists—that is, when the people of God reach their heavenly home—prophecies will cease.

Fail. Gr. *katargeō*, “to render null,” “to bring to an end,” here used in the passive form, “to be brought to an end.”

Tongues. Like prophecy, this gift, which served a useful function in the early church (see Additional Note on Chapter 14), would no longer be required.

Cease. Gr. *pauō*, “to pause,” “to leave off.”

Knowledge. Not knowledge in general, but the gift of knowledge, which enabled men to explain the truth clearly and logically to others (see on ch. 12:8). Paul is setting forth the superiority of love over various spiritual gifts that were useful in building up the church, but which, with the church triumphant in the kingdom of glory, will no longer be needed.

Shall vanish away. Gr. *katargeō* (see above under “fail”).

9. *In part.* The gifts of knowledge and prophecy provide only partial glimpses of the inexhaustible treasures of divine knowledge. This limited knowledge will appear to be all but canceled in the superior brightness of the eternal world, as the light of a candle loses its importance when placed in the bright light of the sun.

10. *Perfect.* Gr. *teleios*, “complete,” “entire,” “fully mature.” Even the knowledge acquired by the most brilliant of men is insignificant when compared with the vast ocean of knowledge in the universe. Thus the boasting of the Corinthians was completely out of place (see ch. 8:1, 2). When Jesus Christ comes again to redeem His own, then the partial illumination of the human mind by all the knowledge possessed by man will be lost to view in the superior brightness of the divine revelation of truth, even as the light from the stars disappears when the morning sun appears.

Shall be done away. Gr. *katargeō* (see on v. 8). There can be no suggestion here that knowledge of truth will ever cease or pass away; truth is eternal, and the knowledge that man has of eternal truth will always remain. It is the partial nature of that knowledge that will cease when man is changed from mortal to immortal (see v. 12; cf. ch. 8:2). Likewise, when this world comes to an end, and men hold open, face-to-face communion with God, prophecy will have served its purpose and will no longer be needed.

11. Child. Gr. *nēpios*, literally, a “non-speaker,” an “infant.” Here the apostle uses the illustration of the differences between the experiences of childhood and those of manhood to emphasize the great difference that exists between the dim understanding of things possessed by men now, and the bright light of knowledge that will be theirs in heaven.

Spake. Or, “used to speak,” that is, it was my habit to speak. The meaningless sounds made by a child who is learning to talk are here compared with the wisdom that will replace earthly knowledge in the future, immortal state. When one reaches manhood he lays aside as of no value the ideas and feelings of childhood, which formerly seemed of such great importance. In a similar way, when heaven is reached, men will lay aside the ideas, views, and feelings that are cherished in this life and are considered so valuable and important.

Understood. Or, “used to think,” that is, it was my habit to think. This refers to the early, undeveloped exercise of the childish mind, a mode of thought that cannot be regarded as connected reasoning. The understanding was narrow and imperfect, and knowledge was meager. Things that occupied the attention then, lost their value as adulthood was reached.

Thought. Or, “used to reason,” that is, it was my habit to reason. The thinking and reasoning of childhood appear puerile, shortsighted, inconclusive, and erroneous to an adult. So it will be when God’s people are in the kingdom of glory; there will be as much difference between earthly plans, opinions, understanding, and reasoning powers and those of heaven as there is between those of childhood and those of manhood.

Put away. Gr. *katargeō* (see on v. 8).

12. Through. Rather, “by means of.”

Glass. Gr. *esoptron*, “a mirror.” Another illustration is presented to show the imperfection of the best knowledge that can be obtained on earth. Ancient mirrors consisted of pieces of polished metal (see on Ex. 38:8). The image seen in such mirrors was frequently blurred and dim. Our knowledge of eternal truth is now obscure and dim in comparison with what it will be in heaven. Now our vision is clouded by the infirmities of the physical being, which have their origin in sin; even mental perception is impaired by wrong habits of living, so that spiritual things are only dimly perceived (see 7T 199, 257, 258; 2T 399, 400).

Darkly. Gr. *en ainigmati*, “in a riddle,” “in an enigma,” as in a puzzle where some of the pieces are missing, so that it cannot be properly put together. Such is our present vision of spiritual truth. It is partial, obscure, dim; yet that which can be understood is sufficient to bring joy to the faithful believer as he is enabled to see something of the beauty of the plan that God has made for the redemption and glorification of man. In heaven that which has obscured will be removed and the things that have puzzled men

will be made plain; knowledge will increase, and with the increase of knowledge will come ever-increasing joy (see 8T 328).

Shall I know. That is, know fully, recognize, acknowledge, understand. The idea of “know fully” is not in the word translated “know,” earlier in the verse.

Even as. That is, in the very same manner; not necessarily to the same extent. When the imperfections of this life are all past and that remarkable change has been effected whereby the “corruptible” puts on “incorruption” and “this mortal” puts on “immortality” (ch. 15:52–54), dimness of vision will be replaced by clear sight, with all intervening obstructions removed. There will be face-to-face communion, so that the redeemed believer will, according to his ever-increasing ability, know and understand things fully.

I am known. Rather, “I was fully known,” or “I have been fully known,” that is, by God. Although in this life man’s knowledge of God is partial, God’s knowledge of man is complete. The more complete knowledge that man will possess in the world to come is compared with God’s knowledge of man in this present life. However, man’s knowledge will never equal God’s, or even approach it. For this reason the phrase “even as” must not be interpreted as meaning “equal in extent” (see above under “even as”). The words of this verse have sometimes been used to state the truth that in the kingdom of glory God’s people will recognize one another (see DA 804). It should be remembered that this is not Paul’s meaning in this present passage. There will indeed be such a recognition, but the apostle is here speaking of our present perplexities that in the world to come will be explained, and of our imperfect knowledge that will there be made complete (see 5T 706).

13. *Abideth.* This word conveys the idea of permanence. Exclusive of love, all the things that have been dealt with in this chapter, including prophecy, tongues, and other gifts of the Spirit, will cease to be of value or will be canceled, but the three basic elements of Christian experience will not pass away; they are permanent. Therefore the Christian is exhorted to concentrate his attention on these.

Faith, here not the spiritual gift known as faith (see on ch. 12:9) but the experience described in Heb. 11 (cf. on Rom. 4:3), must be of eternal value, for it will ever be an essential of harmonious life in the new earth. Hope, being a desire for an object and an expectation of obtaining it, will by its very nature be a part of the experience in heaven, where there will ever be fresh fields for the people of God to explore and new delights for them to enjoy (see 1 Cor. 2:9; Ed 306, 307). All the treasures of heaven cannot be enjoyed at once by the redeemed, and as long as there is anything that is to be desired and expected for the future, hope will exist.

Greatest. When it is realized that of all qualities of character, love is the one that inspiration uses to describe the very nature of God, it is easy to see why the apostle should say that above all gifts of the Spirit, this is the greatest (see 1 John 4:7, 8, 16). As a manner of life, love is more effective, more victorious, more satisfying, than the possession and exercise of the various gifts of the Spirit enumerated in ch. 12 (see 1 Cor. 12:31). Love for God and our fellow men is the highest expression of harmony with God (see Matt. 22:37–40; 8T 139). Love lived out in the life of the believer is the great test of the sincerity of one’s Christianity (see Isa. 58:6–8; Matt. 25:34–40; 6T 273–280).

To be a Christian is to be like Christ, who “went about doing good” (Acts 10:38). Christians, then, are those who, in the spirit of Jesus, go about doing good to all who need their help. They do it with no self-interest, but because the love of God in their hearts

makes it impossible for them to do anything else (see 6T 268; 3T 524). Love is the superexcellent way, because its practical expression is the test that is to decide the eternal destiny of all men. Those whose religion is one of mere outward compliance with forms and observances will discover that such is not acceptable to God (see 5T 612). Self-denying love, producing unity among the believers, will convince the world that God did send His Son into the world to save mankind. This is God's chosen method for His people to bear testimony to the truth of the gospel (see John 17:21, 23). Such love, which shows no desire to exalt, justify, or gratify self, but is dedicated to selfless ministry to the needy, is an argument that unconverted men cannot gainsay. They see in it something incomprehensible to their philosophy of life. Their hearts are touched, and their intelligence responds to the evidence of the power of godliness in the lives of converted men. Thus love is demonstrated to be the greatest way of preaching the gospel and advancing the kingdom of God.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

- 1 CH 560; CS 29; Ev 507; 2T 116, 581; 4T 133; 5T 98
- 1-3AA 318; MB 38
- 1-55T 168
- 3 2T 116; 4T 133
- 3-72T 169
- 4 Ed 114; FE 279; ML 179, 334; 4T 65; 5T 123
- 4, 5 AA 543; DA 549; FE 283
- 4-74T 257; 5T 290
- 4-8AA 319; Ed 242; MB 16
- 5 CW 67; DA 20, 439; EW 112; ML 84; 2T 276, 313; 3T 397; 5T 124; 7T 243
- 5-7GW 448
- 6 FE 279
- 6-85T 169
- 7 MH 498; 2T 135; 4T 27; 5T 404
- 11 AH 119, 213; 3T 194
- 12 AH 544; DA 804; Ed 303, 306; GC 676, 677; MB 27; MH 466; ML 12, 353, 366; SC 113; SR 432; 1T 30; 3T 540; 5T 706; 6T 309; 8T 328
- 13 AA 319; MM 251; 3T 187; WM 328

CHAPTER 14

- 1 *Prophecy is commended, 2, 3, 4 and preferred before speaking with tongues, 6 by a comparison drawn from musical instruments. 12 Both must be referred to edification, 22 as to their true and proper end. 26 The true use of each is taught, 27 and the abuse taxed. 34 Women are forbidden to speak in the church.*

1. Follow after. Gr. *diōkō*, “to pursue.” The Corinthians were urged to use all possible diligence to secure and develop love. Before taking up an analysis of the gift of tongues, Paul gave a final and urgent exhortation concerning the more excellent way which he had praised and described so vividly in ch. 13.

Charity. Gr. *agapē* (see on ch. 13:1).

Desire. Gr. *zēloō*, “to be zealous for.” The word is translated “covet earnestly” in ch. 12:31 (see comment there).

May prophesy. For a description of the gift of prophecy see on ch. 12:10. In ch. 14 Paul contrasts the gift of prophecy with that of tongues, showing the former to be of greater benefit to the larger number. The Corinthians exalted the gift of tongues above that of prophecy, doubtless because of its spectacular nature. Some may have despised prophecy, as appears to have been the case in Thessalonica (1 Thess. 5:20). The Corinthians were urged to pursue love, which leads men to seek gifts that can benefit others as well as themselves. Men should not seek for the gifts in order to exalt themselves in any way, but that they might serve God better and bring more help to His church (see Acts 8:18–22; 19:13–17).

2. Unknown tongue. The word “unknown” is supplied. For a discussion of the varying views as to the nature of these tongues see Additional Note at end of chapter.

Not unto men. See Additional Note at end of chapter.

In the spirit. That is, under the influence of the Spirit, doubtless in a manner similar to that of a prophet when he is “in the Spirit” (see on Rev. 1:10).

Mysteries. For a definition of “mysteries” see on Rom. 11:25. The Spirit revealed divine truths to the one speaking in tongues. The revelation, however, benefited only the speaker. The sounds he uttered were not intelligible to those hearing him, nor, in fact, addressed to them.

3. He that prophesieth. That is, he who speaks under the influence of inspiration. The prophet spoke in a language known to those who heard him. His services brought blessing and instruction to the church, whereas he who spoke in a tongue edified only himself (v. 4).

Unto men. The prophet is one who is called by God to be the agent through whom divine mysteries are revealed to others (see Isa. 6:9; Jer. 1:5–7; Joel 1:1, 2; etc.)

Edification. Literally, “building up.” The messages of the prophets would serve to build up the experience of the Christian in progressive stages.

Exhortation. Gr. *paraklēsis*, “admonition,” “comfort,” “encouragement.” The related word *paraklētos* is the name given to the Holy Spirit in John 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7. For the significance of the name see on John 14:16.

Comfort. Gr. *paramuthia*, in meaning almost identical with *paraklēsis* (exhortation).

4. An unknown tongue. Literally, “a tongue.” The word “unknown” is supplied.

Edifieth himself. The gift, therefore, performs a useful function, and has its place, but not in public assemblies unless an interpreter is present (see vs. 5, 19). It may be noted that with copies of the OT Scriptures rare, there would be more need for personal revelations of divine truth (see v. 4).

Edifieth the church. The prophet receives divine revelations, but he is merely the agent by whom these revelations are to be imparted to the church so that it may be built up.

5. All spake with tongues. Lest he be accused of unduly belittling any gift of the Spirit, Paul expressed a desire that all the believers could speak with tongues. It was an important gift, and had a prominent part to play in the work of the church. However, this gift was not to overshadow the less spectacular but more important gift of prophecy.

Greater. The gift of prophecy was greater because of its value to the church. More were benefited by it than by the gift of tongues. The gifts of the Spirit should be evaluated according to their usefulness, rather than by their spectacular nature.

Except he interpret. Apparently the one who spoke with tongues was not always able to interpret the mysteries that had been revealed to him. Paul counsels him to pray “that he may interpret” (v. 13), but warns that “if there be no interpreter” he should “keep silence in the church” (vs. 27, 28).

Edifying. See on v. 4.

Speaking with tongues. Paul asserted that he spoke with tongues more than all the Corinthians (v. 18).

Revelation. Gr. *apokalupsis*, “an uncovering,” “an unveiling.” As used here it refers to an activity of God in revealing to men that which cannot be discovered by the natural powers of the mind.

By knowledge. Paul is here probably referring to the gift known as “the word of knowledge” (see on ch. 28:8).

By prophesying. It is difficult to distinguish between “prophecy” and “revelation,” for the prophet speaks by revelation. Paul is probably distinguishing between fresh revelations of truth and inspired utterances adapting known truths to specific applications. Or, the former may have reference to content, and the latter to means of delivery.

Doctrine. Gr. *didachē*, “teaching.” Instruction was the work of those who were gifted as “teachers” (see ch. 12:29).

7. Pipe. Gr. *aulos*, in the LXX the equivalent of the Heb. *chalil*, for a description of which see Vol. III, pp. 38, 39. The NT *aulos* was probably a simple flute.

Harp. Gr. *kithara*, a “lute” or “zither.”

Distinction. Even lifeless instruments, if they are to speak in the language of music, thereby influencing the emotions of their hearers, must make a distinction in the sounds produced by them. They must be controlled by the accepted laws of tone and rhythm, and the intervals of scale and measure; otherwise the sounds they give out do not produce the desired effect.

8. Trumpet. For a description of ancient horns and trumpets see Vol. III, pp. 39–41. The language of the trumpet was intelligible to the army. But if the one playing the trumpet did not give a clear call, confusion would result, and the army would be unprepared for battle.

9. Tongue. Here probably referring to the organ of speech rather than to the exercise of the gift. This verse would then be a further illustration of the point in vs. 7, 8.

Into the air. That is, producing no effect.

10. Voices. Gr. *phōnai*, “tones,” “sounds,” “voices.” In the context some prefer to translate the word “languages” (see RSV). Languages are spoken with the intention of conveying some intelligible idea to the hearers. All are for utility and not for display.

11. Barbarian. A common term used to denote one who was not a Greek, one who was outside the sphere of the Greek language and culture. It is used here to denote a person who spoke a foreign tongue.

12. Spiritual gifts. Literally, “spirits.” The different manifestations of spiritual power are represented here as many spirits.

Edifying. There is nothing wrong in desiring spiritual gifts; God wills that He people should thus be blessed, but the great objective of all the outpouring of the Spirit, namely the edification of the church, must be the goal of the desire for the gifts. There should be

no selfish seeking for the gifts order to exalt self and satisfy personal ambition for power above one's fellows.

13. An unknown tongue. Literally, "a tongue." The word "unknown" is supplied.

Interpret. See on v. 5.

14. An unknown tongue. Literally, "a tongue."

My spirit prayeth. The gift of tongues was exercised under the influence of the Spirit. Divine mysteries were uttered "in the spirit" (cf. on v. 2). The experience was probably similar to that of a prophet "in vision" (see on Rev. 1:10).

Understanding. Gr. *nous*, "mind."

Unfruitful. This has been understood in two ways: (1) The prayer is unfruitful because it is not understood by the hearers and consequently imparts no benefit. (2) The conscious mind is largely if not entirely inoperative during the exercise of the gift, as in the case of a prophet in vision.

15. What is it then? What is the correct course for me to follow? A similar form of expression is found in Rom. 3:9; 6:15.

With the spirit. That is, in an ecstatic state (see on v. 2).

The Understanding also. Or, "the mind also." This combination would be true if the speaker in a tongue were able to interpret at the same time (see on v. 5). The interpretation would be in the language of the hearers.

16. Unlearned. Gr. *idiōtēs*, "one without professional knowledge," "unskilled," "uneducated." In the context here it seems to refer to one who is "unlearned" as far as the gift of tongues is concerned. If one who could speak in tongues exercised that power in the church without an interpretation, then others present would be unable to take part in the worship. Thus they would be deprived of a share in the blessing of the service.

Amen. Gr. *amēn*, from the Heb. 'amen, meaning, "firm," "established" (see on Matt. 5:18). When used by the congregation at the close of an address or a prayer it expresses approval of, or agreement with, what has been (see 1 Chron. 16:36; Neh. 5:13; 8:6). It was also said by the congregation at the conclusion of a prayer to denote confidence that the prayer would be heard (see Deut. 27:15–26; Neh. 8:6). Much importance was attached to this practice; this is proved by statements of some of the rabbis, for example: "Greater is he who answers, Amen, than he who says the blessing" (Talmud *Berakoth* 53b, Soncino ed., p. 325). "He who responds, 'Amen, May His great Name be blessed,' with all his might, his decreed sentence is torn up." "He who responds 'Amen' with all his might, has the gates of Paradise opened for him" (*ibid. Shabbath* 119b, Soncino ed., p. 589). If the word was used without due consideration, it was called an "orphaned Amen" (*ibid. Berakoth* 47a, Soncino ed., p. 284). The custom of responding with an "Amen" was common in the synagogue from which it was adopted by the early Christian church (see Justin Martyr *First Apology* 65; Tertullian *De Spectaculis* 25).

17. Well. Or, "rightly." Lest it be thought that one who praises God in prayer or song through the special gift of tongues does not approach God acceptably, Paul says definitely that such worship is good and right. Although it does not edify the church, it edifies the one who thus praises (see v. 4).

18. I thank my God. God is to be recognized as the bestower of the gift of tongues. This verse shows that Paul did not belittle or despise the gift of tongues.

More than ye all. However, the Bible records no instances of the apostle's exercise of this gift.

19. Church. Gr. *ekklēsia* (see on Matt. 18:17). The reference is not to the building in which meetings of Christians are held, but to the organized body of the believers, irrespective of the place in which they might gather.

Five words. In the NT the number "five" is frequently used as a round number meaning a few. Thus there were five sparrows (Luke 12:6), five in a house (v. 52), five yoke of oxen (ch. 14:19), etc.

With my understanding. Or, "with my mind," that is, in a manner other than in "tongues," so as to be intelligible to others.

Teach. Gr. *katēcheō*, "to instruct orally," "to teach by word of mouth." From this word comes the term "catechism," which originally meant oral instruction such as in the tenets of faith. It is better to give a very brief exhortation in church, as indicated by "five words," if of the edifying kind, than a lengthy oration that is not comprehended by the hearers, and thus does not serve to instruct them.

An unknown tongue. Literally, "a tongue."

20. Brethren. A common form of address with Paul (see on ch. 1:10).

Children. The Corinthians took great pride in their wisdom (see chs. 1:20; 8:1, 2). They exulted in their intellectual attainments, but they had been behaving childishly in relation to the gifts of the Spirit. They took more interest in gifts that were of a spectacular nature, such as tongues, than in those that worked more unobtrusively, and yet more effectively for the church, such as prophecy. By their conduct they were setting aside that superior intelligence that they gloried in, and descending to the level of childhood, because they were evaluating things by outward show. There is much of a trivial nature that occupies the time and attention of Christians, to the exclusion of worthwhile thinking and acting. Many things that assume much importance will be recognized as comparable to the playthings of children, when men are faced with the realities of the judgment.

Malice. Gr. *kakia*, "badness," "wickedness," "depravity," "malignity." With respect to this quality, little children may be regarded as being most innocent. This is the attitude that will be seen in all who are filled with the spirit of Jesus.

By ye children. Gr. *nēpiazō*, "to be babes." This word indicates a more infantile state than *paidia*, the word translated "children" in the preceding clause. It suggests that truly newborn Christians will not have an experimental acquaintance with the moral corruption in the world. Probably this innocence in regard to "malice" is part of what Jesus had in mind when He stated that likeness to children is essential for all who would enter heaven (see Matt. 18:3).

Men. Gr. *teleioi*, "full grown," "mature," "of full age." In your minds prove yourselves to be adults.

21. Law Gr. *nomos*, here evidently referring to the entire OT (see on John 10:34).

It is written. The citation is from Isa. 28:11, but agrees only loosely with either the Hebrew or the LXX. The original passage is a warning to Israel concerning their unbelieving and contemptuous treatment of God's messengers. They appear to have asked in derision whether they should be treated like little children by having the "line

upon line” and “precept upon precept” repeatedly dinned into their ears, as little children were taught. Through the prophet God replied that because they had despised such simple instruction, they would be instructed through the people of a different language and foreign utterance. This is a reference to the Gentile nations, particularly Assyria and Babylon, by whom the Jews were taken into captivity. In captivity the Jews would hear only a language would hear only language that to them would be unintelligible and barbarous. It appears, however, that in his use of this OT passage Paul is pointing out that as God anciently used other languages with a purpose, so now He uses the gift of tongues, to serve an important purpose in the Christian Era.

22. Wherefore. This word connects the following clause closely with the preceding observation. As God anciently used the Assyrians and Babylonians to convince the unbelieving Israelites, so now He uses the gift of tongues to convince the incredulous and the slow of faith that the gospel message bears the signet of Heaven. An example may be that of the Holy Ghost falling upon those assembled in the house of Cornelius (Acts 10:24, 44–47).

Sign. It was a sign to them that believe not. This does not mean that the moment faith is established the gift no longer performs a useful function. It ceases to be a “sign” but may continue to edify the believer (see on v. 4).

For them which believe. Prophecy edifies the church and is designed to build up the body of believers (vs. 2–4). It is a sign of the continued presence of God in the church.

23. Be come together. The case here brought to view is one that represents a perverted use of the gift of tongues. This gift was designed to be a sign to unbelievers (v. 22), but when exercised as at Corinth, with everyone speaking at the same time, the gift had the opposite effect.

Unlearned. Gr. *idiōtai* (see on v. 16). Here the word seems to refer to persons unacquainted with the phenomenon of the gift of tongues.

Unbelievers. They may be either Jews or heathen. The mention of unbelievers shows that non-Christians attended Christian meetings. Perhaps they came from curiosity, or a desire to know something about the Christian religion. Like the “unlearned,” they too would be unable to comprehend what was going on.

Mad. Gr. *mainomai*, “to rage,” “to rave.” The word occurs elsewhere in John 10:20; Acts 12:15; 26:24, 25. The confusion resulting from the situation here mentioned could not convey any idea of truth or holiness to strangers or visitors who might be present. On the contrary, it would give a wrong idea of Christianity, creating the impression that it is a religion of confusion and nonsense.

24. All prophecy. The effect of a manifestation of the gift of prophecy upon believers and ignorant persons is here contrasted with that of a confused display of tongues. The one who prophesies speaks in a language known to the congregation.

Convinced of all. Rather, “convicted of all.” The Holy Spirit convicts of sin (see on John 16:8), in this case through the messages of those prophesying.

25. Made manifest. Either by conscience being awakened and the real designs and motives of the heart being revealed by the Holy Spirit, or by secret facts concerning the strangers present in the meeting being revealed under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. It was the revelation of the secrets of her life that brought the Samaritan woman to the conviction that Jesus was a prophet (John 4:19; cf. v. 29).

Falling down. A posture of worship common in the Orient.

Report. Gr. *apaggellō*, “to declare.” His message is the reverse of that given by the strangers who attend meetings where there is a disorderly display of tongues (v. 23). The inward conviction brought about by the powerful witness of those who have the gift of prophecy, each uttering clearly, logically, and winningly the special phase of revelation imparted to him by the Spirit, impels him to confess his faith in the power of God.

26. How is it? That is, What then is the inference to be drawn from what has been said? What then is to be done?

Every one. Paul does not mean that every individual possessed all the various gifts here listed, but that all the gifts would be in the church at the same time, distributed among the various members according to the wisdom and will of God (see ch. 12:6–11).

Hath a psalm. That is, has the ability to utter one of the sacred songs found in the book of Psalms in an unusual manner. Or, a believer may be inspired to compose a song of praise and desire to sing it in the meeting (cf. Ex. 15:20, 21; Judges 5:1; Luke 2:25–32).

Doctrine. Or, “teaching” (see on v. 6).

Revelation. This probably is a reference to that which is revealed to one who has the gift of prophecy. It is a communication from God for the benefit of the congregation.

Interpretation. See on chs. 12:10; 14:5.

Edifying. Compare vs. 3–5. See on v. 12.

27. An unknown tongue. Literally, “a tongue.”

By course. That is, in turn, not at the same time.

One interpret. See on chs. 12:10; 14:5. Possibly one person would be capable of interpreting all that was said by those speaking with tongues.

28. Keep silence. This shows that the one endowed with the gift of tongues had a measure of control over the exercise of the gift (cf. on v. 32).

To himself. Personal edification was apparently the primary purpose of the gift as manifested at Corinth (see Additional Note at end of chapter).

29. Two or three. The counsel to the prophets is similar to that given to those endowed with the gift of tongues. The object of the counsel is to avoid confusion (see v. 33).

The other. Literally, “the others.” For the identification of “the others” see below under “judge.”

Judge. Gr. *diakrinō*, “to discriminate,” “to discern.” Some believe that “other” refers to others in the church who had the gift of prophecy and likewise the gift of discernment, who were to evaluate the utterances of the prophets who spoke and to determine whether their messages were from God or were inspired by some other power (cf. 1 Thess. 5:21; 1 John 4:1). Jesus warned the church that there would be many “false prophets” that would arise and seek to deceive the believers, and the church is to be on guard against such at all times, more especially so as the end approaches (see Matt. 24:5, 11, 24; 2 Thess. 2:9–11). Others believe that Paul’s counsel is directed to the hearers, whose duty it was to make an appropriate application of the message to their individual experiences.

30. Be revealed. God is the one who gives the revelation to the one sitting by. In deference to the new revelation the speaker of the moment should bring his statement to a close. Only one prophet was to speak at a time (v. 31).

Sitteth by. This indicates that the congregation was seated. The one addressing the congregation was doubtless standing (cf. on Luke 4:16).

Hold his peace. Gr. *sigāō*, “to be silent,” “to keep silence.”

31. All prophesy. If proper order was observed in the meeting, and each in his turn addressed the church, it would be possible for all who were impelled, to give an account of the truth as it had been revealed to them.

All may be comforted. Or, “all may be exhorted.” The combined messages would provide appropriate instruction for all. One member might receive encouragement and help by listening to one particular speaker, whereas others would bring acceptable exhortation to other members of the congregation, and in this way all would be edified.

32. Subject to the prophets. Apparently there were those who claimed that they could not remain silent when under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. This contention Paul flatly denies. True prophets had control over their own minds and could speak or remain silent at will. Inspiration does not take away individuality and free choice. The human agent expresses in his own style and thought the truths that have been revealed to him (see GC v–vii).

Confusion. God is not a being who either has in Himself or produces disorder, disunion, discord, or confusion. The true worship of God will not result in disorder of any kind. This verse presents a general, governing principle of Christianity that is derived from the nature of God. He is the God of peace, and it is not to be taught that He could be pleased by a form of worship characterized by confusion of any kind (see Rom. 15:33; 16:20; 1 Thess. 5:23; Heb. 13:20). Christianity tends to promote order (see 1 Cor. 14:40). No one who is submissive to the leading of the Holy Spirit will be disposed to engage in scenes of disorder and confusion such as that which would result from several persons speaking at the same time in tongues or in prophecy. The worshiper will be ready to express his love and gratitude to God in prayer and testimony, but he will express it with seriousness, tenderness, and a genuine respect for the maintenance of order in the house of God, and not with a desire to interrupt and disturb the dignified worship of God.

All churches. This principle of orderly procedure in the worship of God, Paul notes, prevails in all the churches, and should therefore be accepted in Corinth also. God is the author of peace in all places, and true believers in Him will seek to preserve peace in worshipping Him, by restraining any desire to exalt self by an untimely display of the endowments of the Spirit given to them.

Some editors and translators connect the phrase “as in all churches of the saints” with v. 34 (see RSV). It is impossible to decide with finality to which clause the phrase properly belongs.

34. Women keep silence. If the last phrase of v. 33 is connected with v. 34 (see on v. 33) the passage reads: “As in all the churches, let your women keep silence.” With such a division the injunction for women to keep silence is shown to be not merely a regional restriction because of some local circumstance, but a reflection of the general custom in all the churches. That the custom was general may also be inferred from 1 Tim. 2:11, 12, where, without singling out any particular church, Paul admonishes: “Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence.”

Some have found difficulty in understanding this prohibition in terms, not only of our modern concepts of the place of women in the church, but also of the place and service of women in Bible history (see Judges 4:4; 2 Kings 22:14; Luke 2:36, 37; Acts 21:9). Paul himself commended the women who labored with him in the gospel (Phil. 4:3). There is

no doubt that women played a definite part in the life of the church. Why, then, should they be prevented from speaking in public? The answer is found in v. 35.

Law. The Scriptures teach that, on account of her part in the fall of man, woman has been assigned by God to a position of subordination to her husband (see Gen. 3:6, 16; Eph. 5:22–24; 1 Tim. 2:11, 12; Titus 2:5; 1 Peter 3:1, 5, 6). Owing to the change in his nature by the entrance of sin into his experience, the harmonious life that man had previously known was brought to an end. No longer was it practical for husband and wife to have equal authority in the leadership of the home, and God chose to place upon man the major responsibility of making decisions and instructing his family (see PP 58, 59).

35. Ask their husbands. Such a procedure would prevent unseemly interruptions in the service of worship and avoid the confusion attendant on such interruptions.

Shame. This was true because both Greek and Jewish custom dictated that women should be kept in the background in public affairs. Violation of this custom would be looked upon as disgraceful and would bring reproach upon the church.

36. From you. The church at Corinth was not the first, but one of the last, that Paul had founded. Hence that church was not in a position to prescribe rules of conduct for other churches, or to claim the right to differ from them. It was not alone in proclaiming the gospel; therefore it must give due consideration to generally accepted principles of behavior and procedure in worship. The Corinthian church had apparently adopted unusual customs, such as that of permitting women to appear in public services unveiled (see on ch. 11:5, 16) and to speak in the church in a way unknown to other churches. They had allowed irregularity and confusion to exist in the church. But they had no right to differ from other churches in this way, nor had they any right to tell the other churches that they too should tolerate such confusion and disorder. They should have recognized their duty to conform to the practice of the general body of Christian churches.

You only. The Corinthian church was not the first to be established, neither was it the only one. Through His servants God was raising up churches in many lands. If one church had the right to originate customs and peculiar habits, others had also. If that idea were to be adopted, it would result in confusion and disorder. Therefore all the churches should adopt the same general plan for procedure in public worship, and customs that were not followed in other churches should not have been allowed at Corinth.

37. To be a prophet. All who claim to have received any of the gifts of the Spirit, but who refuse to recognize the instruction given by Paul as coming from the Lord, would thereby show that their inspiration was not from above.

Lord. Paul did not speak by his own authority or in his own name. He spoke to the Corinthians in the name of the Lord and under the inspiration of His Spirit. By accepting his counsel and obeying the instructions that came to them through him, they would show that they were willing to be led by the Lord. True faith will always demonstrate its genuineness by a careful regard for the commands of God. On the other hand, any profession of faith that disregards the divine commands, rejects the authority of the Scriptures, and pays no attention to the peace and order of the church, proves that it is not genuine.

38. Be ignorant. Gr. *agnoeō*, “not to acknowledge,” “not to recognize.” In effect, Paul is saying that if anyone should not recognize the fact that the apostle was inspired by God, and therefore did not receive his instructions as being God’s commands, he does so at his peril. Paul had given sufficient evidence of his God-given commission and did not

need to say anything further in that connection. One who rejected the counsel that came through the apostle would be left to take the consequences. There was nothing more that could be done for him; he must answer to God for his rebelliousness.

Willful ignorance of the commands of God will not excuse anyone, but will result in ultimate ruin. The Holy Spirit will not continue endlessly to plead with one who stubbornly clings to his own erroneous ideas and ways of living, even after he has been shown the right way (see Gen. 6:3; Hosea 4:17). Such stubborn, willful ignorance of God's plans for the world is to be a characteristic attitude of a certain class of persons in the last days, and will serve as a sign of the nearness of the end (see 2 Peter 3:3–5). It is dangerous to reject light from God in order to continue to gratify the desires of the natural heart, which is always at enmity against God (see Rom. 8:6–8; Gal. 5:16, 17; 1 John 2:15, 16).

Let him be ignorant. Textual evidence is divided (cf. p. 10) between this and the reading “he is not acknowledged [or “recognized”].” If the latter reading is adopted, the meaning is probably that such persons are not recognized by God. Such an experience is the opposite of that described in ch. 8:3: “If any man love God, the same is known of him.”

39. Covet. Gr. *zēloō*. “to be zealous for.” Summing up his argument, Paul reaffirms the priority given to prophecy in v. 1, where he pointed to the gift of prophecy as the most desirable spiritual endowment Christians could seek. It is highly desirable that one be able to speak under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit in such a way that the church will be edified.

Forbid not. No obstacle is to be placed in the way of the exercise of the gift of tongues. The only thing to be guarded against is the use of the gift in public meetings when no interpreter is present (see Additional Note at end of chapter).

40. In order. Gr. *kata taxin*, “according to rank,” “according to arrangement.” The expression was employed as a military term denoting the regularity and order with which an army is drawn up in ranks in orderly array. Many questions might be raised about the methods and forms of worship in the churches, but good sense and due reverence for God would indicate that which is fitting in His worship, and will restrain worshipers from excesses. Everything should be done decorously, as becomes the worship of the Omnipotent Creator, and there should be no confusion, unnecessary noise, or disorder (see Hab 2:20; Ev 314, 636, 637; Ed 243; PK 48, 49; PP 303; 4T 626).

The Christian must always guard against the evil of formality in public worship. God looks not for outward show and display of talent, but for sincere, loving devotion to Him expressed in prayer and praise (see John 4:24; 9T 143). Dignity and reverence are essential, but they will be inspired by a genuine sense of the majesty and greatness of God, and not by any response to the prompting of the natural heart for self-exaltation. For the public worship of God to be truly reverent it must be conducted in such a way that all present may take an intelligent part in all that is done. Therefore any use of a language that is not understood by the worshipers is entirely out of place, unless such language is interpreted for the benefit of all.

ADDITIONAL NOTE ON CHAPTER 14

Two principal views with regard to the gift of tongues as discussed in ch. 14 are held: (1) That the manifestation is to be described in terms of the phenomenon of tongues on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2); that the language spoken under the influence of the gift was a foreign language, one that could be easily understood by a foreigner of that tongue; that by speaking in a foreign tongue in the church when no one understanding the language was present the Corinthians were perverting the function of the gift; and that it was this misuse of the gift that Paul rebuked.

(2) That the manifestation was different from that on the day of Pentecost; that the language was not one spoken by men, and that thus no man could understand unless there was present an interpreter who possessed the gift of the Spirit to understand the language (1 Cor. 12:10); that its function was to confirm the faith of new converts (1 Cor. 14:22; cf. Acts 10:44–46; 11:15) and to provide personal spiritual edification (1 Cor. 14:4); that it was the exercise, in public assemblies, of this gift, designed primarily for private, personal edification, that Paul rebuked in 1 Cor. 14. Other views combine elements of these two views.

It will be helpful in a consideration of this question to enumerate the characteristics of the gift of tongues as it was manifested at Pentecost and in Corinth. For a discussion of the gift there was clearly an ability to speak in foreign languages, and the purpose of the gift was to facilitate the spread of the gospel (cf. AA 39, 40). A second function may be seen in the experience of Peter in the house of Cornelius, where the manifestation of the gift convinced Peter and the skeptical Jewish Christians who were with him that God accepted the Gentiles (see on Acts 10:46), and doubtless also convinced Cornelius and those with him that the work of Peter bore the signet of Heaven.

Concerning the gift later manifested at Corinth the following characteristics are noted: (1) The gift is inferior to prophecy (1 Cor. 14:1). (2) The speaker in tongues addresses God, not men (v. 2). (3) No man understands the speaker in tongues (v. 2). (4) The speaker is “in the spirit,” that is, in an ecstatic state (1 Cor. 14:2, 14; cf. on Rev. 1:10). (5) The speaker utters mysteries (1 Cor. 14:2; for a definition of mysteries see on Rom. 11:25). (6) The speaker edifies himself, not the church (1 Cor. 14:4). (7) Paul wishes that all had the gift (v. 5). (8) The speaker should pray that he may interpret so that the church may be edified (vs. 12, 13). (9) The understanding, or mind, is unfruitful when one prays in a “tongue,” thereby indicating that the experience is not one of the conscious mind (v. 14). (10) The gift was for a sign to them that believe not (v. 22). (11) The gift was to be used in the church only if an interpreter was present (v. 27); otherwise the speaker was to speak only to himself and to God (v. 28). (12) The Corinthians were admonished not to forbid speaking in tongues (v. 39).

This list of characteristics of the gift makes clear that the apostle is not dealing with a counterfeit gift. He has listed “tongues” among the genuine gifts of the Spirit (ch. 12:8–10), and nowhere hints that the manifestation described in ch. 14 is not of God. On the contrary, he commends it (ch. 14:5, 17), claims that he spoke with tongues more than the Corinthians (v. 18), wishes that all had the gift, and urges the believers not to forbid the

⁷Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment*. Commentary Reference Series (1 Co 13:1). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.

exercise of the gift (v. 39). His aim throughout the discussion is to show its proper place and function and to warn against its abuse.

That the Corinthians abused the gift is evident. They spoke with tongues in the church when no interpreter was present and when no one but the speakers themselves was benefited. Several apparently spoke at the same time and while others were prophesying, teaching, etc. This resulted in general confusion (vs. 26–33, 40).

The question as to whether the tongues were in a spoken language or in a language unknown by men, or simply inarticulate sounds, has been much debated by commentators. Those who believe that the speech was in a language foreign to the speaker but understood by those familiar with the language argue by what they call the analogy of Scripture, that the gift in Corinth ought to be explained on the basis of the manifestations on Pentecost (Acts 2) and on other occasions (Acts 10:44–46; 11:15; 19:6) and that therefore the purpose was clearly to enable men to preach the gospel in tongues formerly unknown to them. Passages like 1 Cor. 14:2, which indicate that no man understands, they interpret as meaning that no one present understands, although foreigners might. They further point out that it is difficult to conceive that the Holy Spirit would manifest Himself in an unknown tongue under the circumstances of ch. 14.

Those who hold that the phenomenon consisted of unintelligible sounds not related to any human language argue that this is the most natural way to interpret the various passages concerned, and that this is the inevitable conclusion to be drawn when all of the characteristics listed are taken into consideration. They believe that Paul's illustrations in vs. 7–10 are designed to show that the utterances were either inarticulate sounds or a language not capable of being understood by men unless they too were possessed of the Spirit and were endowed with the gift of interpretation (ch. 12:10).

Whatever view is adopted, one thing is certain, that the manifestation of the gift at Pentecost and the purposes for which it was given (Acts 2) differed in many respects from the gift as manifested in Corinth. The gift at Corinth served to edify the speaker, not others (1 Cor. 14:4). Paul did not encourage its use in public unless an interpreter was present (vs. 12, 13, 27). He did not recommend its use in the church (vs. 19, 28). The address was to God, not men (vs. 2, 28). The speaker was in a state of ecstasy with his conscious mind dormant (v. 14). These things were not true of the gift that came upon the disciples at Pentecost. The ability to speak in foreign languages was distinctly designed to edify others. It was bestowed so that the disciples could preach the gospel without the services of an interpreter. The address in a tongue was to men, not God, and the speaker was not in an ecstatic state but functioned even as one might do who had acquired facility in the language through study (see on Acts 2).

Because of certain obscurities with regard to the precise manner in which the gift of tongues was anciently manifested, Satan has found it easy to counterfeit the gift. Incoherent ejaculations were well known and widely met with in pagan worship. Also in later times, under the guise of Christianity, various manifestations of so-called tongues have from time to time appeared. However, when these manifestations are compared with the scriptural specifications of the gift of tongues they are found to be something quite at variance with the gift anciently imparted by the Spirit. These manifestations must therefore be rejected as spurious. However, the presence of the counterfeit must not lead us to think meanly of the genuine. The proper manifestation of the gift with which Paul

deals in 1 Cor. 14 performed a useful function. True, it was abused, but Paul attempted to correct the abuses and to assign the operation of the gift to its proper place and function.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

2 1T 412, 419

7 1T 231

7–12CT 243

8 CT 459; CW 170; Ev 119, 218, 397, 523, 689; FE 407, 483; 5T 719; 6T 61, 375, 431; 8T 168; 9T 29

13–19CT 244

15 Ev 127, 507, 508, 509, 510; 1T 146; 2T 582, 699; 9T 143

32, 33 AA 200

33 AA 96; TM 54; 1T 231, 653; 7T 284

40 Ev 207; EW 97; PP 376; 1T 145; 5T 274; 6T 98, 169

CHAPTER 15

3 *Christ's resurrection, 12 he proveth the necessity of our resurrection, against all such as deny the resurrection of the body. 21 The fruit, 35 and manner thereof, 51 and of the changing of them, that shall be found alive at the last day.*

1. Moreover. Gr. *de*, “but,” or “now,” here marking a change in the line of thought, and the introduction of a new subject, the resurrection.

This chapter contains what may be called the crowning glory of the epistle, an exposition of the truth of the resurrection. The discussion may be divided into four sections: (1) proof that there is a resurrection (vs. 1–34); (2) the nature of the bodies of those who are raised (vs. 35–50); (3) a statement concerning what will happen to those who are alive at Christ's second advent (vs. 51–54); (4) the practical consequences of this doctrine (vs. 55–58). The testimony of the resurrection of Jesus given in vs. 3–8 refers to some incidents not recorded in the Gospels (see vs. 6, 7). The chapter declares that the death and resurrection of Christ were subjects of ancient prophecy, and were events supported by the testimony of living witnesses (vs. 5, 6). It is one of the earliest written testimonies to the resurrection, having been written within 25 years of the event (see pp. 102, 103). It shows that the evidence for the resurrection as a literal, historical fact was sufficient to convince the powerful intellect of a hostile contemporary in the person of Paul himself.

Among the errors that had crept into the church at Corinth as a result of the lowering of the moral standard by some of the believers, was the rejection of belief in the resurrection (see chs. 3:3; 5:1, 2; AA 319). Paul's detailed discussion of this doctrine emphasizes its vital importance (cf. John 5:28, 29; 11:25; Acts 23:6; 24:14, 15; Rom. 1:3, 4; Phil. 3:10, 11; Rev. 20:6). Satan is ever ready to snatch away vital truth and replace it with specious error; therefore Christians would do well frequently to review the principal gospel truths, filling their minds with them, that there may be no place for mistaken ideas (see on 2 Tim. 2:15).

Declare. Gr. *gnōrizō*, “to make known,” “to cause to know,” but since Paul is repeating what he has already told the Corinthians, the word may be used in the sense of “to reiterate,” “to remind.” The apostle feels it necessary to repeat the substance of his preaching, and, in so doing, places special emphasis on the doctrine of the resurrection.

Gospel. See on Mark 1:1. The contents of the gospel, or “good news,” that Paul preached to the Corinthians may be gathered from chs. 1:7–9, 17–24; 2:2; etc., from which it will be seen that the cross of Christ stands in the forefront of the message. Of necessity there is associated with this central subject the doctrine of the Saviour’s atoning death (ch. 15:3). Everything connected with the life of Christ on earth is of interest and importance to the believer, but Paul here reveals that the glorious news of salvation from sin reaches its climax in the resurrection.

Received. Paul had faithfully preached the gospel, and now reminds the church members that they had received and accepted its message.

Stand. The Greek form of the verb suggests that they had stood and were continuing to stand in the faith Paul had delivered to them. He had founded the church at Corinth (see Acts 18). It was therefore appropriate for him to remind them of the great truths upon which the church had been established, but from which their attention had been diverted by other things that had been introduced among them, such as matters of strife and contention. It is good for Christians to be reminded often of the gospel by which the Holy Spirit effected their conversion; such repetition will help to keep them humble, and save them from depending on their own philosophical achievements (cf. Col. 2:8).

2. Saved. Literally, “are being saved.” Salvation is a continuous experience (see on Rom. 8:24; cf. COL 65).

Keep in memory. Rather, “are holding fast,” that is, to what Paul preached unto them. This holding fast means more than a mere mental assent to the doctrines, it indicates absolute conviction of the thing believed. Such conviction would lead to behavior compatible with their faith, and would not permit them to entertain erroneous thoughts.

Believed in vain. There was nothing wrong with the message that had been preached, but the quality of the Corinthian belief in that message may have been open to question. If their belief was halfhearted, it would have little value. If their faith was firm, then they would find Paul’s doctrine sufficient to guide them into the way of salvation. Having said that, the apostle proceeds to assure them that he had indeed given them the true gospel.

3. Delivered. Paul never claims authorship for the gospel he is preaching. He makes clear that he is passing on a message that had been given to him by the Lord (cf. 1 Cor. 11:2, 23; Gal. 1:12; Eph. 3:2, 3). This stresses the divine origin of the doctrine he is preaching, thus exalting his message and making its observance imperative.

First of all. Either, first in order of presentation or first in importance. The apostle lists four “first” facts that he had given to the believers: (1) Christ died for our sins, (2) Christ was buried, (3) Christ was resurrected, and (4) Christ appeared (vs. 3–5). Some have suggested that these form the basis for the earliest known Christian creed.

For our sins. The Greek word translated “for” (*hyper*) carries the force of “on behalf of,” or “because of.” Jesus, the Lamb of God, died as an expiatory offering on account of our sins. He died to make an atonement for sin (see on Rom. 3:24–26; 4:25; 5:8; 2 Cor. 5:21; Gal. 1:4; 1 Peter 2:24). This is the first great fact taught by Paul to the Corinthians. Christ’s vicarious death atoned for our sins, but He did not remain under the power of death. Inasmuch as He did not sin, death could not hold Him, and He rose triumphant from the grave (see on John 10:17; Acts 2:22–24).

Scriptures. It is apparent that Paul had given his converts a thoroughly scriptural basis for their faith, and can now appeal to many of the prophecies concerning the Messiah that are found in the OT (cf. on Luke 24:26, 27, 44). Elsewhere his skillful

applications of the passages dealing with the life, sufferings, and death of the promised Messiah had brought conviction to his hearers and silenced the opposition of his Jewish critics (see on Acts 9:19–22; 13:14–41; 17:3; 18:4–6; 24:14; 26:4–8, 22, 23; 28:23).

4. Buried. Christ's burial certified that our Saviour had indeed died and provided the necessary condition preceding resurrection. Joseph of Arimathaea's request for permission to remove the Saviour's body from the cross led to Pilate's inquiry concerning the truth of His death (Mark 15:43–45). The preparation for His burial as recorded in the Gospels, and the account of His being placed in the tomb and guarded by Roman soldiers at the instigation of the chief priests, all give assurance that He died (see Matt. 27:57–60, 62–66; Luke 23:50–56; John 19:38–42).

Rose again. "Again" is supplied. The verb is in the perfect passive form, and hence conveys the meaning "has been raised and is still alive." The previous verbs "died" (v. 3) and "was buried" (v. 4) occur in the aorist tense, as historical events in the past, in contrast with the continuous sense implied by the perfect. Thus Paul is emphasizing not only that Jesus had risen from the dead but that He still continues in a resurrected state, and that the condition of having thus been raised is a permanent one.

Third day. For a discussion of the interval between Christ's death and resurrection see Vol. V, pp. 248–251. Compare Matt. 12:40; Luke 24:46.

5. Was seen. Or, "appeared," in which case the action would be credited to the risen Lord rather than to the unprepared Peter. Paul is still listing the major points of the gospel he had delivered to the Corinthians (v. 3).

Cephas. Gr. *kēphas*, a transliteration of the Aramaic name *Kepha'*, which is translated into Greek as *Petros* whence, Peter (see on Matt. 4:18). For Christ's appearance to Peter see on Luke 24:34. Paul here appeals to the witness of those who had firsthand knowledge of the resurrection, and particularly to those who still lived to attest its truth. Seeing that he was merely refreshing their minds regarding the doctrine he had previously preached to them, he did not attempt to reproduce all the available evidence, but simply summarized what they already knew.

Twelve. There is slight textual evidence (cf. p. 10) for the reading "eleven," which is doubtless an attempt to harmonize this verse with the number of the apostles who remained after the death of Judas and before the election of Matthias (cf. Acts 1:26). At Christ's first appearance to His apostles, only ten were present, since Thomas was absent from the group (John 20:24). But Paul was doubtless using the title "twelve" as an official designation of the apostolic group; hence there is no vital discrepancy between this verse and historical facts.

6. Above five hundred. The Gospels make no mention of the fact that Jesus appeared to such a large company, but a statement made by Matthew is doubtless a reference to this gathering (see ch. 28:10, 16; Additional Note on Matt. 28). The Eleven, in obedience to their risen Lord's instruction (Matt. 28:9, 10), went into Galilee. It is hardly likely that they kept to themselves the news of this divine appointment, but doubtless informed the believers that Jesus planned to meet with them. Above 500 responded to the information, demonstrating that the Lord had many more disciples than is generally supposed.

Greater part remain. That is, most of the 500 were still alive when Paul wrote his epistle. Unitedly they could bear strong testimony to the certainty of Christ's resurrection, for an event that could be attested by so many firsthand witnesses could not be easily overthrown.

Fallen asleep. Gr. *koimaō*, “to sleep” (see on John 11:11). This expression is used in the Scriptures to signify death (see Matt 9:24; Acts 7:60; 1 Cor. 15:18; 1 Thess. 4:13–15; 2 Peter 3:4).

7. James. There is no evidence as to which James is meant, but most commentators identify him with James, the Lord’s brother. For a discussion of the identities of the various men called James see Introduction to the Epistle of James. There is no other record of the Lord’s appearance to James, but if the James mentioned here was indeed the Lord’s brother, and the leader in the church council at Jerusalem (see on Acts 12:17; 15:13), then Paul had met him in Jerusalem and would doubtless have personal testimony from James concerning the appearance to which reference is here made.

Of all the apostles. This doubtless refers to Christ’s last appearance to the apostles, at the time of His ascension to heaven (see Acts 1:6–12).

8. Last of all. This phrase raises the strong presumption that the foregoing list of appearances is arranged in chronological order, and that Paul was the last one to whom Christ personally appeared.

One born out of due time. Gr. *ektrōma*, “the abortion,” “the stillborn embryo.” The word occurs only here in the Greek NT, but is used in the LXX (Num. 12:12; Job 3:16; Eccl. 6:3). The apostle is implying that, compared with the other apostles, he is no better than a stillborn babe. The other disciples grew and matured into their ministry, whereas he, Paul, was abruptly launched into his apostleship. He may also be expressing his sense of unworthiness to be numbered among the disciples because of the way he had formerly treated those who believed in Christ (see on Acts 7:58; 8:1, 3; 9:1, 13, 21; 26:10). By his unrelenting diligence, the apostle seemed to have shown that he felt a great obligation to make up for his want of personal companionship with Jesus.

9. The least. He had been last of all (v. 8), now he claims to be least (cf. on Eph. 3:8).

Not meet. That is, not fit, not worthy, insufficiently qualified. Paul recognizes the truth that no man, of himself, is in any sense worthy of being called to the service of God (see on 2 Cor. 3:5).

Because I persecuted. It appears that he never forgave himself his former fierce opposition to the Christian believers, and the memory of that experience tended to keep him humble and continually grateful for the goodness of the Lord (see Acts 22:4; 26:9–11; Gal. 1:13; 1 Tim. 1:13). In the truly converted heart, God’s forgiveness produces an awareness of sin as well as feelings of gratitude and humility. Such an experience equips a man for witnessing to others.

10. Grace of God. For a definition of “grace” see on Rom. 3:24. All that Paul had become or had achieved in the Lord’s service he attributed to the unmerited mercy, favor, and power of God. He had learned the essential lesson that all human accomplishments are valueless in the work of God if separated from an impartation to the soul of that spiritual life from God that is called “grace.” Paul knew that all his zeal, piety, abilities, and success as an apostle were the result of the undeserved favor God had manifested toward him. By God’s grace he had been enabled to accomplish more than the other laborers.

I am what I am. The phrase stresses the condition of Paul’s spiritual state, and contains no boastful egotism.

Not in vain. A note of thankful relief creeps into Paul’s words here—he is glad God’s grace was not wasted when bestowed upon him.

Laboured more abundantly. That is, worked harder. Consecration and hard work rarely fail to produce abundant fruitage. But, as the next phrase reveals, the apostle allowed no overwhelming pride to mar his evangelistic success.

Not I. Paul left no room for anyone to imagine that he took credit to himself; he gives all the glory to God. All who achieve true success in the work of God on earth will acknowledge that any good they have accomplished has resulted from God's enabling grace (cf. Gal. 2:20; Phil. 2:13; 4:13).

11. Therefore. Here Paul closes the comparison between himself and the other apostles (vs. 9, 10), and concludes that since all valid Christian testimony derives its power from God, the identity and personality of the human witness is relatively unimportant.

So we preach. What a bold affirmation of the unity of apostolic witness! All the apostles gave the same testimony about the resurrection of Christ; hence it was immaterial which of them had brought the message to the Corinthians. This principle is of universal application, and may be usefully remembered in the modern church. The human agent is merely a mouthpiece used by the Holy Spirit to convey truth to men, and if success crowns his efforts, the credit belongs to God (cf. ch. 3:6).

So ye believed. Paul reminds his readers at Corinth of their original acceptance of his doctrine, which was that of all the apostles.

12. Now. With this verse the apostle begins his closely woven arguments concerning the resurrection. In vs. 5–8 he has established the historical basis of the resurrection by presenting testimony from a multitude of reliable eyewitnesses. He now asks how, in the light of this well-proved fact, any Corinthian believer can deny a general resurrection of the dead.

No resurrection. Apparently there were some at Corinth who denied the possibility of a bodily resurrection of the dead. In vs. 13–19 Paul demonstrates the destructive nature of such a denial, and shows how such a belief is incompatible with the proved fact that Jesus had been raised (see also v. 16).

Of the dead. Literally, “from among dead [ones].”

13. Christ not risen. If a resurrection of the dead is considered to be impossible, and belief in it to be absurd, then it must follow that Christ did not rise from the grave, for the general objection to the resurrection of the dead would apply in His case also. Therefore it is not possible to deny the general resurrection without denying the well-established resurrection of Jesus. This, says Paul, is the inevitable result of denying the resurrection, and involves a denial of Christianity, the removal of the Christian's hope of eternal life.

14. Preaching. Gr. *kērugma*, “the thing preached.” The emphasis is on the content of the preaching (see on ch. 1:21).

Vain. Gr. *kenos*, “empty,” “without content,” “devoid of truth” (cf. on v. 17), an apt description of any attempt to preach the gospel apart from the resurrection of Jesus. Such preaching would indeed be “empty,” robbed of one of its central, historical facts. If Christ be not risen, Christian witness is condemned on two counts: (1) Jesus repeatedly declared that he would rise from the dead (see Matt. 16:21; 17:22, 23; 20:17–19; etc.), and if He did not rise, He was an impostor; (2) the apostles were basing their preaching on an event that they alleged did occur, and thus were parties to the imposture, holding out a hope that could not be fulfilled.

Your faith. Disbelief in the resurrection invalidates not only apostolic preaching but also Christian belief in that preaching. By doubting the possibility of a resurrection, such men were destroying all they had previously held dear.

15. False witnesses of God. The implication is that it would have been a sin to preach that Christ had risen from the dead if such were not the case, for it would be wrong to say that God had done something He had not done, as would be the case if there were no resurrection, and Christ had not been raised. The apostles would have been announcing as an act of God, and claiming to have witnessed, an event that never took place.

He raised not up. Paul is thoroughly considering the skeptical attitude concerning the resurrection. His argument deals with the supposition that the dead do not rise, although he is not endorsing that view. The denial of the possibility of a general resurrection argues the impossibility of Christ's having risen and thus denies the whole basis for believing in Christ.

16. Rise not. This repetition of the conclusion already stated in v. 13 shows Paul's concern over the insidious teaching that had turned some of the Corinthian believers away from the truth about the resurrection. Satan tries to undermine faith in the resurrection in order to make it easier for men to accept the first great lie, with which he denied God's sentence of death for disobedience (see Gen. 2:17; 3:4). If man does not really die when this earthly life comes to an end, then there is no need for a resurrection. If, on the other hand, death is a cessation of existence, then further life would be dependent upon the resurrection (see on Ps. 146:4; Eccl. 9:5, 6, 10).

17. Vain. Gr. *mataios*, "useless," "aimless," "to no purpose" (cf. on v. 14). Here attention is drawn to the absolute lack of any objective in Christian faith if Christ has not been raised from the dead. The members at Corinth were strong enough to reject the suggestion that their faith was "useless," and would therefore be bound still more closely to belief in the resurrection.

Sins. In vs. 16, 17 Paul repeats the reasoning he gives in vs. 13, 14, but with a difference. Verses 13, 14 stress the emptiness of faith without the resurrection of Christ; vs. 16, 17 reveal the hopelessly lost condition of man apart from the resurrection. Although it is true that "Christ died for our sins" (v. 3), it is also true that He "was raised again for our justification" (Rom. 4:25; see ch. 10:9). If Jesus was not raised from the dead, then He was an impostor; faith in Him would not bring pardon for sin, and the sinner would retain his guilt. Such an assumption could not be tolerated by anyone who had experienced the joy of having his sins forgiven. Furthermore, baptism, which is a type of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, would lose its significance if there were no resurrection, for the exhortation is given, to rise and "walk in newness of life," even as Christ was raised from the dead (see Rom. 6:3, 4).

18. Then. Paul now presents another consequence that inevitably follows from the denial of the resurrection.

Fallen asleep. See on v. 6.

In Christ. To the Corinthians this would primarily refer to deceased Christians, but in a wider sense it refers to all who, from Adam to the end of human history, have died while believing that confession of sin and faith in the atoning blood of the Saviour would assure them of forgiveness and eternal life.

Are perished. If there be no resurrection, then those who have died remain dead, the prospects held out by Christianity are a cruel delusion, and all the righteous dead are

doomed to remain asleep in their graves. No Christian could accept such hope-destroying conclusions. Thus Paul's reasoning again stresses the vital position of the resurrection in Christian doctrine (see on v. 16).

19. In this life only. Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 10) the following word order: "If in this life in Christ we are hoping only." This order shows that Paul is stressing not "this life" but the fact that the Christian faith is based on more than mere hope. He thus vividly portrays the futility of a devitalized Christianity. Disbelief in the resurrection robs men of certainty concerning life after death, and leaves them with an ineffective faith for the present existence.

Miserable. Gr. *eleeinos*, "wretched," "pitiable," "miserable." This clause reads, literally, "we are more wretched than all men." It should be noted that Paul is not here suggesting that piety and conformity to the revealed will of God in this life are not accompanied by happiness. The believer has cause to be happier than other men, but if the resurrection is a delusion, then Christians are more deserving of pity than any other people. No others have had such high hopes of enjoying eternity, so no others could experience so deep disappointment if those hopes are destroyed by disproving the resurrection. The apostle employs such reasoning to demonstrate to the Corinthians the faith-destroying and illogical nature of a denial of the Christian doctrine of the resurrection. Moreover, Christians were subjected to greater trials and persecutions than most other people, so if, after suffering on account of their faith, they were disappointed in their hope of the resurrection, their condition would truly be pitiful.

A strong demonstration of the genuineness of Christianity may be drawn from this verse. It is conceivable that some men may be willing to endure privation and toil if they are certain of adequate recompense for their sacrifice; but it is incredible that the apostles should labor and suffer while knowing that the glorious hope they proclaimed was a delusion, that Christ had not risen. Such a proposition is so ridiculous as to be quite incredible.

20. But now. Paul has historically proved the truth of Christ's resurrection (vs. 5–8), and has emphasized the destructive effects of denying the resurrection (vs. 13–19). He can now claim to have demolished the negative teaching, and can triumphantly state the certainty of Christ's resurrection. The expression "but now" impresses this certainty on the minds of Paul's readers. It turns away from the negative considerations of vs. 12–19, and boldly considers the positive results accruing from belief in the resurrection. (vs. 20–34).

Risen. See on v. 4, where the same form of the Greek verb occurs.

And become. Textual evidence attests (cf. p. 10) the omission of these words.

Firstfruits. The ancient Israelites were commanded to present the first sheaf of the barley harvest to the priest, who waved it before the Lord as a pledge of the full harvest that was to follow. This ceremony was to be performed on the 16th of Nisan (Abib; see on Lev. 23:10; see v. 11). The Passover supper was eaten on Nisan 14 (see on v. 5), and on the 16th came the offering of the first fruits. The wave sheaf of the first fruits of the harvest was a type of Christ, the "firstfruits," or pledge, of the great harvest that will follow when all the righteous dead are raised at the second coming of Jesus (see 1 Cor. 15:23; 1 Thess. 4:14–16). Christ rose from the dead on the very day that the wave sheaf was presented in the Temple (see on Lev. 23:14; Luke 23:56; 24:1; see Vol. V, pp. 248–251). As the first sheaf was a pledge and an assurance of the ingathering of the entire

harvest, so the resurrection of Christ is a pledge that all who put their trust in Him will be raised from the dead.

That slept. Rather, “who have fallen asleep.” For sleep as a figure of death see on v. 6. The term here refers to those who have died as Christians, believing in the Lord Jesus Christ as their Saviour.

21. For since. With this verse Paul introduces his comparison between the first and second Adams (vs. 21, 22, 45–47). The line of thought is closely paralleled in the Epistle to the Romans (see on ch. 5:12–19).

By man. Or, “through a man.” The reference is to Adam (cf. v. 22).

Came death. Sin entered the experience of the human family through the disobedience of man; and as a result of sin, death became the fate of all (see on Rom. 6:23). If man had not sinned, men would not have died. If there had been no sin, men never would have seen death (see on Gen. 2:17; see PP 49, 51, 53).

By man. Or, “through a man.” The reference is to Christ (cf. v. 22).

Resurrection. Note that Paul is still following his theme of the resurrection. Since death came through a sinful man, it is appropriate, in the beautifully ordered plan of God, that deliverance from death should come through the sinless Man, Christ Jesus. Sin was introduced into the human race by one man; recovery from its effects would be by another Man.

22. In Adam. This verse clarifies v. 21. It also provides an admirable summary of the subject, with which Paul deals more fully in his Epistle to the Romans (see on ch. 5:12–18). To the Corinthians he is content to point the contrast between the results of Adam’s life—“all die”—and the results of Christ’s life—“shall all be made alive.”

All die. See on Rom. 5:12. The sentence pronounced on Adam affected the whole human family, involved all in the certainty of death, and began to operate as soon as Adam sinned.

Even so. That is, in the same manner, similarly. It should be borne in mind, however, that the work of Adam and that of Christ are not completely parallel, since Adam was a sinner, and Christ the Sinless One.

In Christ. That is, through faith in His atoning death and life-giving resurrection.

All be made alive. All men are subject to death by virtue of Adam’s sin and their own sinfulness, but only those who are “in Christ” will share the eternal benefits of the Saviour’s resurrection. To this extent, the first “all” in this verse is universal, whereas the second “all” is necessarily limited. Some have interpreted the second “all” to embrace all mankind, the wicked and the righteous. That this interpretation is not tenable here may be seen from the phrase “in Christ,” and from comparison with vs. 51–53, where “all” clearly refers only to believers.

23. Every man. Literally, “each one.”

Order. Gr. *tagma*, “that which has been set in order,” “band,” “troop [of soldiers].”

Tagma does not occur elsewhere in the NT. The word was originally a military term, and conveys the idea of a series of ranks, such as are suggested in this verse. The triumphant Christ led the way on the resurrection morning, but He will be followed by the ranks of His saints who have been sleeping.

Firstfruits. See on v. 20. Others, such as Moses (see on Matt. 17:3) and Lazarus (see on John 11:43), had died and been raised to life before Jesus came out of the tomb, but they did so only by virtue of, and in anticipation of, Christ’s own resurrection (cf. DA

530). Without Christ's victory over death, no other resurrection would have been possible. In this real sense, Christ is the first fruits of those who are made alive.

Afterward. Gr. *epeita*, "thereafter," "then," or "afterward," used to enumerate successive events, and usually suggesting a chronological order. It is so used in vs. 6, 7, but a shorter form (*eita*, "then"), occurring in vs. 7, 24, carries a similar meaning. Here, Christ's own resurrection, as the first fruits, is separated from the resurrection of the righteous.

Christ's. That is, the people who belong to Christ, those who died trusting in the Redeemer. This class includes all who were justified by faith in OT times, those who believed in Christ during Paul's day, and those who have believed since then. The redeemed of all ages may rightly be described as "Christ's," for our Redeemer purchased each one with His own blood.

At his coming. For comment on the word "coming" (Gr. *parousia*) see on Matt. 24:3. Paul definitely connects the resurrection of the redeemed with Christ's return. See on John 14:3; 1 Cor. 15:51–53; 1 Thess. 4:14–16; Rev. 20:6.

24. Then. Gr. *eita* "next," "afterward," "after that" (see on v. 23). *Eita* never means "at the same time" (cf. Mark 4:17, 28, where the words "afterward," "then," "after that" [*eita*], are clearly used to denote chronological sequence), therefore that which follows is not said to take place at the same time as the resurrection of the righteous. Rather, *eita* introduces a new epoch, which follows after an interval of time.

Cometh the end. The identity of "the end" might be in question if Paul did not proceed to describe it in the succeeding phrases of the verse. That which follows shows that he was referring to the end of the great controversy that has brought such sorrow into the universe. Further than this we cannot safely go, since Inspiration has given no specific light on the matter.

When. Gr. *hotan*, "at the time that," "whenever," often used of events of which the author is sure, but whose time he does not attempt to fix.

Delivered up. Gr. *paradidōmi*, "to hand over [to another]."

Kingdom. It is difficult to decide the exact meaning of the word "kingdom" in this context, but it may legitimately be considered from the following points of view: (1) The kingdom of this world rebelled against God; Christ came to restore it to God's government, and when His task is completed He will, as it were, hand over the restored kingdom to His Father. (2) The Saviour came to establish "the kingdom of heaven" (see on Matt. 3:2; 4:17; Mark 1:15), and when this work is finally accomplished He will triumphantly give that kingdom into the hands of His Father. This is in harmony with the whole tenor of Christ's life, for He lived to glorify God (Luke 2:49; John 4:34; 6:38; 17:4). Whenever the handing over may take place, complete sovereignty will be restored to the Father, for all opposition will have been overcome, and unity will reign throughout the universe (GC 678).

When he shall have put down. Or, "whenever he may have abolished."

Rule. Gr. *archē*, "principality," "sovereignty," "rule." The plural form, *archai*, is translated "principalities" in Rom. 8:38 (see comment there).

Authority. Gr. *exousia* (see on Rom. 13:1).

Power. Gr. *dunamis*, “might,” “power.” “Rule,” “authority,” here describe those who have opposed God, terrestrial as well as celestial, but cf. on Eph. 1:21; 6:12.

25. He must reign. That is, it is necessary, in accordance with God’s plan (see Ps. 110:1; Matt. 22:43, 44), for Christ to continue reigning until the complete subjugation of all God’s enemies. That it is Christ who subjugates the opposition is clear from 1 Cor. 15:24. Verses 27, 28 show that He does this under the Father’s mandate.

He hath put. That is, the Father (v. 28).

Under his feet. This corresponds to the “footstool” of Ps. 110:1, from which psalm the apostle freely quotes.

26. Last enemy. Death is here personified, as in v. 55 and Rev. 6:8. There is no article in the Greek, and the word for “last” occupies the first, or emphatic, place in the sentence, stressing the finality of Christ’s victory over all opposition, even over man’s most-feared enemy, death. The end of death will coincide with the end of sin. When there is no more sin, there will be no more death, for death results from sin (see on Rom. 6:21, 23; James 1:15). Some maintained that there is no resurrection, death is the end. The apostle gives the startling reply that in God’s plan there is finally to be no death, for death itself will be destroyed (see on Isa. 25:8; Nahum 1:9; Rev. 21:4).

Destroyed. Gr. *katargeō*, “to do away with,” “to abolish,” “to put down” (v. 24).

27. For. Verses 27, 28 are further explanations of the matter propounded in vs. 24, 25, and open with a quotation from Ps. 8:6. Paul takes the words that were primarily written about man’s dominion over God’s created works and applies them to Christ’s rulership over “all things.” The first Adam had lost his dominion and found death; the second Adam regained that lost dominion and destroyed death.

Hath put. Gr. *hupotassō*, “to arrange under,” “to subject,” “to subordinate.” This one verb (*hupotassō*) is used throughout vs. 27, 28 and is variously translated “to put under,” “to subdue,” “to subject.” The Scriptures confidently give the assurance that nothing, not even death, will be excluded from total subjugation by Christ (cf. Phil. 3:21; Heb. 2:8).

He saith. That is, the Father.

He is excepted. That is, God is not included in the things that are put under Christ’s feet. Paul is careful to avoid any suggestion that would exalt the Son above the Father (see Vol. V, pp. 917–919). He sees God as having delegated certain powers to Christ for the fulfillment of their united plans for the conquest of sin, but clearly recognizes that the eternal relationships of Father and Son are not overthrown because of the prominent part played by Christ in the great controversy.

28. And when. Gr. *hotan de*, “but when.” Verse 27 deals with Christ’s leadership in the victory over sin; v. 28 deals with the subsequent relationship of the conquering Son to the Father.

Son. In the divine plan for the redemption of the world the Father committed everything into the hands of the Son (see on Matt. 11:27; Col. 1:19). When Christ’s mission is completed and the enemies of God subdued, then the Son will deliver “up the kingdom to God, even the Father” (1 Cor. 15:24). This act implies no inferiority of the Son compared with the Father. It is a demonstration of the unity of purpose among the

members of the Godhead, whereby the activities of one are seen to be but the carrying out of the united will (Vol. V, pp. 917–919; see on John 10:30).

That God may be. Here is epitomized the supreme objective of Christ's career—the Son lived to glorify the Father (see John 17:1, 4, 6). Christ will not rest until the Father's supremacy is acknowledged by the universe (see on Eph. 4:6; Phil. 2:11), and nothing remains outside the orbit of God's beneficent control.

29. Else. Or, "otherwise." Paul here returns to his main line of reasoning concerning the resurrection.

Baptized for the dead. This is one of the difficult passages in Paul's writings, for which no entirely satisfactory explanation has yet been found. Commentators have produced as many as 36 attempted solutions to the problems raised by the verse. Most of the suggestions deserve but little notice, a few merit serious attention. Two important points should be borne in mind when seeking an understanding of the passage: (1) Paul is still speaking of the resurrection, and any suggested solution should be closely connected with the main theme of ch. 15. (2) A reasonable interpretation must conform with a correct translation of the Greek phrase *huper tōn nekrōn* ("for the dead"). It is generally agreed that *huper* ("for") here means, "on behalf of." Three possible interpretations are suggested:

- (1) The passage should be translated "What then shall they do who are baptized? [Are they baptized] for the dead? If the dead do not rise again at all, why are they even baptized? Why also are we in danger every hour for them?" This translation, though possible, does not satisfactorily explain the phrase "on behalf of the dead."
- (2) Paul is referring to a heretical custom whereby living Christians were baptized on behalf of dead and unbaptized relatives or friends, who were supposed thus to be saved by proxy. Church Fathers make several references to such a practice, quoting the custom of the Marcionite heretics (Tertullian *Against Marcion* v. 10; *On the Resurrection of the Flesh* 48; Chrysostom *Homilies on 1 Corinthians* xl. 1). In addition, Tertullian refers to the pagan festival *Kalendae Februariae*, wherein worshipers underwent a lustration, or washing, on behalf of the dead (*Against Marcion* v. 10). Marcion flourished about the middle of the 2d century A.D. This second view requires the assumption that the practice dates back to Paul's day. The objection has been raised that the apostle would be unlikely to cite a pagan or heretical practice in support of a fundamental Christian doctrine. But Paul, without in any way endorsing the practice, might say, in substance: "Even pagans and heretics fasten their faith on the hope of a resurrection, and if they cherish that hope, how much more should we" Jesus used the story of the Rich Man and Lazarus as the framework for a parable, though not endorsing its literal application (see on Luke 16:19).
- (3) It is possible to interpret v. 29 in terms of its context (vs. 12–32) as another proof of the resurrection: (1) The word "else" refers to the argument of vs. 12–28 and might be paraphrased, "but if there is no resurrection ..." (2) The word "baptized" is used figuratively of braving extreme danger or death, as in Matt. 20:22; Luke 12:50. (3) "They ... which are baptized" refers to the apostles, constantly facing death as they proclaimed the hope of the resurrection (1 Cor. 4:9–13; cf. Rom. 8:36; 2 Cor. 4:8–12). Of his own experiences at Ephesus—where Paul wrote this epistle—he declared that he stood "in jeopardy every hour" (1 Cor. 15:30), "despaired even of life" (2 Cor. 1:8–10), and, as it were, died "daily" (1 Cor. 15:31). (4) "The dead" of v. 29 are the Christian dead of vs.

12–18, and, potentially, all living Christians, who, according to some at Corinth, had no hope beyond death (vs. 12, 19). According to this interpretation, v. 29 could be paraphrased thus: “but if there is no resurrection, what shall the messengers of the gospel do, if they continually brave death on behalf of men who are destined to perish at death anyway?” It would be folly (v. 17) for them to face death to save others, “if the dead rise not” (vs. 16, 32). The continued courage of the apostles in the face of death is thus excellent evidence of their faith in the resurrection.

That it is not possible, as some teach, for Christians to be baptized vicariously on behalf of deceased relatives and friends is apparent from the many Scriptures which declare that a man must personally believe in Christ and confess his sins in order to profit by baptism and be saved (Acts 2:38; 8:36, 37; cf. Eze. 18:20–24; John 3:16; 1 John 1:9). Even the most righteous of men can “deliver but their own souls” (Eze. 14:14, 16; cf. Ps. 49:7). Death marks the close of human probation (see Ps. 49:7–9; Eccl. 9:5, 6, 10; Isa. 38:18, 19; Luke 16:26; Heb. 9:27, 28).

30. *Stand ... in jeopardy.* Gr. *kinduneuō*, from *kindunos*, “danger,” “peril,” hence, “to be in danger.” Why should the apostles constantly risk their lives to preach repentance and faith in Christ if there is no such thing as a resurrection from the dead? Gospel messengers have no other object in encountering perils by land and sea than to make known the truth connected with the glorious future state in the kingdom of God; and if there is no future happiness to look forward to, it hardly makes sense to incur such dangers.

31. *I protest.* This expression is a free translation of the Greek particle *nē*, used to convey a strong affirmation, or a swearing to the certainty of the thing stated. Paul could hardly have stated his conviction more strongly.

Your rejoicing. Rather, “your boasting.” Paul means “my boasting in you” (see 1 Cor. 9:2; cf. Rom. 15:17).

I die daily. The word order in Greek places this phrase at the beginning of the sentence. Paul is displaying his greatest pride, his glorying, in the fruits of his gospel ministry, to support his reasoning, to underline his “protest” about dying daily. He did not take personal credit for his work, but ascribed its fruitfulness to “Christ Jesus our Lord.” The life of the great Apostle to the Gentiles was so filled with trials, persecutions, dangers, and hardships that it might have appeared to be a living death (see Rom. 8:36; see on 2 Cor. 4:8–11). But if there is no resurrection from the dead, this daily dying would appear to be foolishness, so once again Paul’s own experience strengthens his presentation of the certainty of the resurrection.

The phrase “I die daily” may also bear a homiletic interpretation. It contains the secret of Paul’s victorious experience. Throughout his life of faithful service for the Saviour he had met on the Damascus road, Paul found that his old, unregenerate nature struggled for recognition and had to be constantly repressed (see on Rom. 8:6–8, 13; Eph. 4:22). He well knew that the life of the Christian must be one of self-denial at every step of the road (see on Gal. 2:20; cf. on Matt. 16:24–26). Christians who find that the old desires still clamor for satisfaction, in spite of their good intentions to serve the Lord, may take courage from the fact that Paul had a similar experience. The Christian life is a continual struggle, well described as a battle and a march, with no resting place until Jesus comes (see MH 453). But the thought of the resurrection, and the glorious life to which it is an introduction, nerves the believer for all trials.

32. After the manner of men. Or, “from a human point of view.”

Fought with beasts. This appears to be a figurative reference to Paul’s experience with ferocious adversaries at Ephesus (cf. Acts 19:23–41). A Roman citizen could not be punished by being forced to fight with wild beasts. He asks, in substance, the question: “What was gained by exposing myself to perils comparable to fighting with wild beasts, if the message of resurrection to life eternal through Jesus Christ is not true? Why should I have undergone such risks in order to announce false teaching? This does not make sense. I might as well have left the people to their fate and said nothing at all.” To what experiences at Ephesus Paul refers, we do not know. In their insensate fury the heathen worshipers of the goddess Diana (or Artemis) were more like wild beasts than human beings. But Paul could not have referred to that particular incident here, for it occurred after the sending of this epistle (cf. 1 Cor. 16:8, 9).

Eat and drink. A citation from the LXX of Isa. 22:13. It would be foolish for Paul, or anyone else, to endure privation, hardship, and persecution in order to preach the gospel of salvation from sin and of future, immortal happiness, if the dead will not be raised. He might as well make the most of this life, enjoying its pleasures to the limit, knowing that death will be the ultimate end. Such indeed seems to be the Epicurean philosophy of many, especially as the second advent of Christ draws near (see Matt. 24:38, 39; 2 Tim. 3:1–4).

33. Be not deceived. Or, “Stop being led astray.”

Communications. Rather, “companionships.” This is a line of poetry by Menander (343–c. 280), perhaps a common proverb. Since all are greatly influenced by those with whom they associate, the selection of friends and companions calls for great care. Paul exhorted the believers to beware of the smooth and plausible arguments of the false teachers who denied the resurrection of the dead. The company of such individuals is to be avoided. Association with those who hold erroneous opinions, or whose lives are impure, has a tendency to corrupt the faith and morals of believers. By daily association with those who did not believe in the resurrection of the dead, and by frequent conversation on that topic, the believers would be likely to lose their clear, positive understanding of the truth. Familiarity with error tends to remove objection to it and to lessen caution against it. For this reason God has always counseled His people to separate themselves from close association with unbelievers (see Gen. 12:1–3; Ex. 3:9, 10; Deut. 7:1–4; Isa. 52:11; Jer. 51:6, 9; 2 Cor. 6:14–17; Rev. 18:4).

34. Awake. Gr. *eknēphō*, “to wake up from a deep sleep [or “stupor”].” The word was often applied to those who awoke sober after intoxication. Here it conveys the idea of shaking off mental bewilderment, and turning from the confusion and folly of doubting the truth of the resurrection. It is a call to turn back from error to right thinking, a warning against the danger of self-complacent apathy. Christians need to be constantly on the alert against insidious infiltrations of false teaching.

Sin not. Or “stop sinning,” “do not keep on sinning.” Be on guard against error; do not accept a teaching that not only is in error but tends to lead into sin. Rejection of belief in the resurrection could lead to a total disregard of all restraint and to unbridled self-indulgence. Paul considered denial of the doctrine of the resurrection as leading to dangerous consequences in regard to the conduct and manner of life of the Christian.

Knowledge of God. There were those among the Corinthians who did not know God as the living and Omnipotent One; their belief in Him was mere theory. Such a condition

resulted in their ready acceptance of the idea that there is no resurrection. The presence of such persons was a disgrace to the whole church and was not to be tolerated.

35. *How?* The natural mind raises objections to the idea of a resurrection of the dead. Observation teaches that subsequent to death, dissolution takes place, and ultimately the body disintegrates completely. Therefore those who place their dependence upon human philosophy might well ask how the scattered dust could be reassembled for the resurrection of the identical individual who died (see Job 34:15; Eccl. 12:7). A further perplexing question is, How will the reconstituted body compare with the body that was dissolved?

36. *Fool.* Gr. *aphrōn*, “senseless one.” The implication in the questions (v. 35) shows that the inquirer speaks without reflection or intelligence.

Which thou sowest. The difficulty propounded in v. 35 might be proposed with regard to the growth of grain, a phenomenon with which all were acquainted, but which caused no comment, nor created any problem in men’s thinking. When a grain of wheat is placed in the ground, it decomposes and dies. But this process is essential to the production of a new plant. If this daily occurrence is readily accepted without question, why should there be any problem about the resurrection of a new body from the old one that decays?

37. *Bare grain.* That is, a mere kernel without any leaf, blade, or covering. Such is the grain when it is sown. The plant that emerges is not the same as the seed that is sown. Thus the body that will come forth from the grave at the resurrection will not be the same that was placed in the grave. There will, of course, be similarities, but at the same time there will be differences. The new body is not composed of the same particles of matter that formed the old body. Nevertheless the personal identity of the individual is preserved (see EGW Supplementary Material on vs. 42–52).

38. *God giveth it a body.* The ever-recurring miracle of nature by which all the many kinds of grain are reproduced, has its source in God, the Author of all life and growth. There is nothing in the kernel itself that, unaided, causes it to spring into life (see 8T 259, 260). Likewise there is nothing in the disintegrating body of the dead that, of itself, leads to the resurrection. But God has arranged that there should be a resurrection, and it is by His power alone that the miracle takes place. In the resurrection each one will have a body that is appropriate for him. The righteous will have glorified bodies, and the wicked will rise with bodies bearing the marks of their lost state (see GC 644, 645, 662).

39. *Not the same flesh.* Flesh is the matter of which the body is composed. Nature reveals various types of flesh. If God has so ordained that there shall be so many varieties of flesh, and thus of bodies, here on earth, it is not to be thought surprising if He provides, in the resurrection, a different kind of body for men.

40. *Celestial.* Gr. *epourania*, “heavenly,” “existing in heaven.” Commentators are divided in their interpretation of this expression. Some believe that Paul is referring to the sun, moon, and stars, whereas others apply the expression to the angels. Both applications are appropriate as illustrations of the fact that all bodies do not have the same form and appearance. However, the reference in the next verse to the sun, moon, and stars seems to support the first interpretation. Two altogether different classes of bodies are here presented for observation; one entirely outside this earth, and the other confined to this earth. After the vast difference between these two classes of bodies is noted, it should not be difficult to realize that there will be a great difference between the earthly, human

bodies that we now possess and understand, and the bodies that we will possess in the resurrection.

Glory of the celestial. The splendor, beauty, and magnificence of the heavenly bodies is very different from that of bodies on this earth. Although birds, flowers, trees, minerals, and men have their own individual beauty and attractiveness, they differ from the things in heaven. Men do not question the difference between the beauty of heavenly things and that of earthly things, so why should there be any hesitancy about acknowledging a difference between the body of man as adapted to life on this earth and that adapted to life in heaven?

41. Another glory. The heavenly bodies—sun, moon, and stars—have varying degrees of splendor and beauty. There are stars of different magnitudes and even of different colors. In v. 40 Paul showed that there was a difference between the different classes of bodies—those in heaven and those on earth. Here he states that there are differences between members of the same class, namely, the heavenly bodies. They differ not only from those on earth but also from one another. He thus strengthens his argument that the resurrection body will differ from the mortal body. God, who has provided such variety in nature, is not limited in His power to provide a new and different body for His saints in the resurrection.

42. Sown in corruption. Paul returns to the comparison between the vegetable kingdom and man (vs. 37, 38). He speaks of the bodies of the redeemed as seed sown in the ground, seed that will produce a harvest for God's kingdom. The graveyard is sometimes appropriately called God's acre. The dissolution that quietly goes on there, out of sight, is preliminary to the glorious resurrection, when the winter of this world's history is past and eternal spring dawns with the coming of Christ (see 1 Cor. 15:52; 1 Thess. 4:16).

It is raised. Paul affirms that the resurrection of the righteous dead with glorified bodies not only is possible, but will actually take place. This is one of the most encouraging truths that can be presented to those who in this life are wasting away with disease, and who look forward with dread to the grave.

Incorruption. The resurrected body of the believer will never again be subject to sickness, decay, or dissolution.

43. Sown in dishonour. There is, in a sense, a disgrace attached to the dead body. Because of its decaying nature it quickly becomes offensive and loathsome, and is buried out of sight.

Raised in glory. Dignity, beauty, honor, and perfection will characterize the resurrected saints, whose bodies have been made like unto that of Christ (Phil. 3:20, 21; GC 645).

Weakness. Gr. *astheneia*, "lack of strength," "infirmity," "sickness." This does not refer simply to the feebleness of the earthly body when alive, but also to its complete powerlessness as a corpse, and its inability to resist corruption. The feeble powers of the earthly body are soon prostrated by sickness, and its vitality speedily disappears before the onslaught of death.

Power. Gr. *dunamis*, "strength," "energy," "might." The power of God will be manifested in the miracle of the resurrection. The resurrected body will experience none of the feebleness and lack of endurance that afflict the earthly body (see Isa. 33:24; 40:31; Rev. 7:15, 16; 22:5; GC 676).

44. Natural. Gr. *psuchikos*, an adjective derived from the word *psuchē*, which word is most frequently translated “soul.” *Psuchikos* means, pertaining to this present life. It is a difficult word to translate into English. The RSV translation “physical” is inadequate, and also contains shades of thought not in *psuchikos*. For example, physical may mean “material,” but the contrast is not between a material and an immaterial body, though the latter is really a contradiction in terms. The resurrected saints will have real bodies. Paul presents the contrast between the body that pertains to this brief earthly life and the glorious body in which the redeemed will be raised to eternal life in God’s kingdom of glory (see 1 Cor. 15:50, 52; Phil. 3:21; Col. 3:4; 1 John 3:2). The natural body is that which is subject to the limitations of temporal existence, such as pain, disease, fatigue, hunger, death. This body is placed in the grave at the conclusion of mortal life (see Job 14:1, 2, 10–12; 21:32, 33). The spiritual body will be free from all marks of the curse (see GC 644, 645).

There is a natural body. Textual evidence attests (cf. p. 10) the reading “if there is a natural body.” The next clause should be translated “there is also a spiritual body.” Paul’s reasoning is not entirely clear. It seems to be based on the proposition that the existence of the lower presupposes the existence of the higher. Or perhaps Paul is basing his statement on the observations he has already made regarding the certainty of the resurrection. The corrupted body that is sown is as certain to spring to life as an incorruptible body, as a seed cast into the ground is certain to produce its corresponding plant.

45. So it is written. The reference is to Gen. 2:7. Paul paraphrases the statement, adding the words “first” and “Adam.”

Soul. Gr. *psuchē*, from which *psuchikos*, “natural,” is derived (see on v. 44).

Last Adam. That is, Christ (see on Rom. 5:14). As men derive their earthly nature from the first man, Adam, so they obtain their resurrection bodies through Christ. The one is the head of the vast company who have a temporal existence; the other is the head of all who through faith in Him will, at His second coming, receive a spiritual body and enter into eternal life (see Rom. 5:15–18; 1 Cor. 15:51–54).

Quickening spirit. That is, a being who has the power to impart life. Adam became a “living soul,” but Christ is the life-giver. Jesus said that He had power to raise the dead (see John 5:21, 26; 11:25). He exercised this power in relation to this temporal, earthly life by raising certain ones from the dead (see Luke 7:14, 15; 8:54, 55). These demonstrations of His power to give life may be accepted as evidence of His power to raise the dead at His second advent.

46. First which is spiritual. The spiritual bodies the saints will possess at the resurrection are a sequel to their natural bodies. The natural comes first. The spiritual bodies do not yet exist, and will not exist until, at the resurrection, God gives to each saint his new body.

47. Earthy. Gr. *choikos*, “made of dust.” Adam, the first man, the one who stands at the head of the human race, was made by God out of the “dust of the ground” (Gen. 2:7).

Second man. That is, Christ (cf. on v. 45).

The Lord. Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 10) the omission of these words, but the omission does not essentially alter the meaning of the passage, because Jesus is the only

one who came down from heaven to become the head of humanity. This “second man” already existed before associating Himself closely with men, but He humbled Himself and shrouded His divinity with humanity (see Gal. 4:4; DA 48, 49) when He came to dwell among men.

48. “As is the earthy. As is the earthy one,” that is, Adam. All the descendants of Adam partake of his fallen nature. They are frail, mortal, subject like him to corruption and death.

Heavenly. At the resurrection the bodies of the saints will be changed, and the new bodies will be “fashioned like unto his [Christ’s] glorious body” (Phil. 3:20, 21).

49. We shall also bear. Textual evidence is divided (cf. p. 10) between this and the reading “let us also bear.” The simple future, however, seems to be more in harmony with the context. See on v. 44.

50. This I say. Paul re-emphasizes what he has set forth in vs. 35–49, that the resurrection bodies will differ from the present bodies. Man’s corruptible body is unfitted for enjoyment of the perfect kingdom of glory. Prior to the entrance of sin into the human race, the human body was adapted to conditions in a perfect world (see Gen. 1:31). All that God had created was perfect; therefore the bodies of Adam and Eve were likewise perfect—free from corruption—and suited to their perfect surroundings. When man sinned, his nature was changed. Therefore before he enters the bliss of Eden restored his body will be changed and adapted to the perfection of heaven.

Some believe that this text teaches that the resurrected bodies will not be composed of flesh and blood, but such a conclusion is unwarranted. “Flesh and blood” is a figure of speech designating a man of this earth (see Matt. 16:17; Gal. 1:16; Eph. 6:12) and hence should not be reduced to bald literalness. Paul is simply affirming that man’s present body is unfit for entrance into the kingdom of God. That resurrected bodies will have flesh and blood may reasonably be deduced from the fact that our new bodies will be fashioned like unto the glorious resurrection body of Christ (Phil. 3:20, 21), which consisted of “flesh and bones” (Luke 24:39; cf. DA 803). It is further reasonable to conclude that the bodies of the resurrected saints will not differ too greatly from the kind of body that Adam possessed when he was first created (Gen. 2:7). If man had not sinned, he doubtless would have retained that body forever.

51. Mystery. See on Rom. 11:25.

Not all sleep. For sleep as a metaphor of death see on John 11:11. Paul calls attention to the fact that there are some who will not die, but who will be translated from the imperfect physical state to the perfect heavenly state. This instantaneous change will make them like the resurrected saints (see GC 322, 323; SR 411, 412).

All be changed. This “all” includes both those who are alive when Jesus comes and those who have died. The former instantaneously exchange their mortal bodies for immortal bodies; the latter are raised with immortal bodies (cf. on 2 Cor. 5:1–4).

52. In a moment. Gr. *en atomō*, “in an indivisible point of time,” “in an instant.”

Atomos occurs only here in the NT. It is the word from which “atom” is derived. Along with the expression, “twinkling [or “wink”] of an eye,” this phrase points to the extreme rapidity with which the change in the bodies of the living saints will take place.

At the last trump. The time when this glorious transformation will take place is next indicated. It will be at the second coming of Christ, for it is then that the “trump of God” will sound, and faithful believers who have died will be raised in bodies that are entirely

free from all effects of sin (Col. 3:4; see on 1 Thess. 4:16). Then Christians who are alive and looking eagerly for the coming of their Lord will undergo a marvelous change, whereby all traces of corruption and imperfection will be removed from their bodies, which will be made like unto Christ's glorious body (see Phil. 3:20, 21; 1 John 3:2). They will have the wondrous experience of being taken from earth to heaven without dying, like Elijah, who was a type of all true believers who will be living when Christ comes again (see 2 Kings 2:11; PK 227).

53. *This corruptible must.* Or, "it is necessary that this corruptible." It is essential that a change take place in the bodies of the saints. And this will take place either by their dying and being raised from the dead in immortal, incorruptible bodies (v. 42), or by their being changed to that state without seeing death; for they cannot enter heaven as they now are (v. 50).

Put on. Gr. *enduō*, "to put on oneself," as a garment, etc. This points clearly to the maintenance of individual, personal identity when this change of body takes place. Each one of the redeemed will retain his own individual character (see COL 332, 361; 2T 266, 267; 5T 215, 216; EGW Supplementary Material on 1 Cor. 15:42–52).

Mortal. That is, subject to death. The gift of immortality will be received only by those who accept God's offer of salvation through Jesus Christ, and this gift will be theirs when Jesus comes again (see John 3:16; Rom. 2:7; 6:23; 2 Cor. 5:4).

54. *Death is swallowed up.* The citation is doubtless from Isa. 25:8, though it does not agree exactly with either the Hebrew or the LXX. When, at Christ's coming, the amazing transformation from mortal to immortal has taken place, both of the righteous dead and the righteous living, then man's great enemy will no longer trouble the redeemed. The last thought that occupied their minds as the shadow of death overtook the saints was that of approaching sleep, their last feeling was that of the pain of death. As they see that Christ has come and conferred on them the gift of immortality, their first sensation will be one of great rejoicing that never again will they succumb to the power of death (see GC 550).

55. *O death.* An allusion to Hosea 13:14 (see comment there). In this glad, victorious cry both death and the grave are personified and addressed, probably by all the triumphant saints, who will be delivered forever from the threat of the suffering and separation caused by death. The sway that this enemy has held over all men ever since the fall of Adam will be forever removed from the redeemed at the second coming of Christ.

Sting. Gr. *kentron*, "a goad," "a sharp point [as of a spear]," "a sting [as of bees, wasps, and scorpions]."

56. *Sting of death.* Here defined as "sin." Death, like a scorpion, has a sting, a fatal power imparted to it by means of sin, the cause of death (see Rom. 6:23). But the redeemed will never again commit sin; therefore they can never again feel the sting of death (see Nahum 1:9; Isa. 11:9; Rev. 21:4).

The law. See on Rom. 7:7–11.

57. *Thanks be to God.* This verse presents the theme, or objective, of all the books of the Bible, namely, to show that the restoration of man to favor with God and to his original condition of perfection and freedom from all the effects of sin, is brought about by the mighty power of God working through our Lord Jesus Christ (see Ed 125, 126; cf.

Rom. 7:25). For this triumph over the power of the adversary the redeemed will give praise and glory to God throughout eternity (see Rev. 5:11–13; 15:3, 4; 19:5, 6).

58. Therefore. In view of the glorious truth that has been revealed concerning the resurrection, believers are exhorted to resist every effort that may be made by the agents of Satan to undermine their faith in Christ.

My beloved brethren. Paul demonstrated in his life the truth that the disciples of Jesus will love one another (see John 13:34, 35). This love is manifest in their willingness to suffer for one another (see Gal. 4:19; Col. 1:24; 2:1, 2; 1 Thess. 2:8, 9; 3:7, 8).

Stedfast, unmoveable. Believers are urged to remain firm in their faith, allowing nothing to disturb them. This appeal to rocklike stability is reinforced by the grand truth of the resurrection so ably expounded by the apostle in this chapter. In the light of such wonderful assurances for the future, believers should not be influenced by the manifold temptations of the devil, whether to indulge the flesh or, through the avenue of worldly philosophy, to turn from the certain facts of the gospel. No person or thing is to be permitted to shake the believer from the foundation of his faith and hope.

Abounding. The great incentive to continual activity in the cause of truth is the positive assurance that such efforts will not be “in vain in the Lord,” but will result in the salvation of souls and the advancement of the glory of God (see Ps. 126:6; Eccl. 11:6; Isa. 55:11; 1 Cor. 3:8, 9).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

- 3, 4 AA 123
- 4–8AA 320
- 6 DA 818
- 8 AA 123
- 10 ML 99
- 13–20AA 320
- 16–18GC 546
- 20 GC 399
- 22 EW 149; FE 382; GC 544; SR 60
- 23 GC 399
- 30 AA 297
- 31 EW 67; MH 453; LS 237; SL 60; 2T 132; 3T 221, 324; 4T 66, 299; 5T 538; 8T 313
- 32 PP 182
- 33 CT 121; 1T 388; 2T 325; 3T 125
- 41 ChS 109
- 42, 43 COL 87; Ed 110
- 45 DA 270; GC 647; ML 323; 1T 659
- 47 FE 133
- 50 GC 323
- 51, 52 EW 110; PK 227; PP 89
- 51–53DA 422; GC 322
- 51–55AA 320
- 52 CG 566; DA 632; EW 273, 287; GC 550; 1T 36, 184
- 52, 53 GC 645
- 53 CS 350
- 54 MYP 273

54, 55 GC 550; PK 239

55 AA 590; CS 350; EW 110, 273, 287; GC 644; ML 349; 2T 229

57 Ed 126; GC 470; ML 317; MYP 114; SL 93; 1T 188; 3T 43

57, 58 AA 321

58 ML 320; 2T 395; 5T 521; 9T 220

CHAPTER 16

1 *He exhorteth them to relieve the want of the brethren at Jerusalem. 10 Commendeth Timothy, 13 and after friendly admonitions, 16 shutteth up his epistle with divers salutations.*

1. Concerning the collection. Paul was promoting a special project on behalf of needy believers in Jerusalem (cf. 2 Cor. 8; 9). Years before he had been the bearer of a special gift for the famine stricken from the church at Antioch (cf. on Acts 11:28–30; 12:25). Paul carried a burden on his heart for his fellow Jewish Christians (cf. Gal. 2:10).

The economic conditions and burdens in Palestine were oppressive upon both Jew and Christian. It has been estimated that the combined taxes, both civil and religious, reached the staggering total of almost 40 per cent of a person's income. For the common people there was no hope of escaping poverty. In addition, the church in Jerusalem suffered much persecution. The majority of the believers there were poor, some of them as a result of becoming Christians (cf. Acts 4:34, 35; 6:1; 8:1; 11:28–30). They needed help from their more fortunately situated brethren in other places (see Acts 8:1; AA 70). Paul had undertaken the responsibility of soliciting help for them from other churches that he visited, and he appealed to the Corinthians to do their share by setting before them the example of their sister churches in Achaia and Macedonia (see Rom. 15:25, 26; 2 Cor. 8:1–7).

Even so. The Corinthian believers were to accept this obligation as had the Galatians. The work of helping the poor is given to the church in all ages in order that its members may develop sympathy and love, and that they may reveal to others the power of the gospel of Jesus Christ (see Luke 14:13, 14; 6T 261, 270, 273, 280; 4T 619, 620; DA 369, 370). Our attitude toward the less fortunate members of society plays a large part in determining our ultimate destiny (see Isa. 58:6–8; Matt. 25:34–46; 5T 612). Jesus Himself set the example in this work of ministering to the needs of suffering humanity; He spent more time in healing the sick than in preaching the gospel (see 4T 225; DA 350).

2. First day of the week. See on Matt. 28:1.

Lay. The construction of the Greek indicates that they were to do so regularly every first day of the week.

By him. Gr. *par' heautō*, literally, “by himself,” equivalent to the English “at home.”

In store. Literally, “treasuring up,” “storing up,” probably in some special receptacle or in some special place in the house.

As God hath prospered him. To give in proportion to one's prosperity may involve a careful checking of accounts, a task that Paul would hardly recommend be done on a day of holy rest.

This verse is often cited in support of Sunday observance. However, when it is examined in connection with the apostle's project for the poor believers in Jerusalem, it is seen to be an exhortation to systematic planning on the part of the Corinthian church members for their part in the offering. There is nothing in the verse that even remotely

suggests that there is any sacredness attached to the first day of the week (see 3T 413; cf. F. D. Nichol, *Answers to Objections*, pp. 218, 219). If all believers today were to adopt this principle of systematic benevolence, there would be an abundance of means for speedily carrying the message of salvation to all the world (see 3T 389).

Gatherings. Gr. *logeiai*, “collections.” Paul requested that the contributions be ready for him when he arrived.

3. By your letters. Literally, “by letters.” There is some difference of opinion among commentators regarding the writer of the “letters” here mentioned by Paul. The phrase may be linked with either the preceding or the following words. The KJV holds to the former interpretation, as does also the RSV; the other interpretation connects the phrase as follows: “whomsoever ye shall approve, I will send by letters.” Those who hold the former view reason that the letters were written by the leaders of the church at Corinth, and designated the appointment and authority of the bearers as their representatives. Those who hold to the latter interpretation believe that Paul offered to write letters commending the representatives of the Corinthian brethren to the church at Jerusalem. However, no names from Corinth are in the list in Acts 20:4.

4. Meet. Gr. *axios*, “worthy,” “suitable,” “worth while.” If the amount to be transferred warranted his presence, or if it was thought that it would be wiser for him to accompany the messengers, Paul was willing to journey to Jerusalem in order to ensure that there would be no question or suspicion concerning the offering sent by the church at Corinth. This is an illustration of his extreme care to avoid giving any cause for misunderstanding or offense (cf. Rom. 14:13, 16, 21; 1 Cor. 8:9, 13).

5. Macedonia. See on Acts 16:9.

6. Winter with you. Paul wanted to make a rather prolonged stay in Corinth and not merely to call as he passed through on his way to other places (v. 7). Therefore he proposed to complete his Macedonian itinerary first (v. 5), and then to spend the winter months with the church at Corinth.

Bring me on my journey. See on Acts 15:3; cf. chs. 20:38; 21:16.

7. Trust to tarry. Literally, “hope to remain.”

If the Lord permit. Compare on Acts 18:21; 1 Cor. 4:19.

8. Ephesus. See on Acts 18:19.

Pentecost. See on Acts 2:1.

9. Opened. Paul referred to the unusual opportunities presented to him at Ephesus for the preaching of the gospel, as the reason why he wished to remain there for some time instead of proceeding at once to Macedonia and Corinth (see vs. 7, 8). Ephesus was an important center of pagan worship in the Roman province of Asia, the goddess Diana (or Artemis) being the principal deity (see on Acts 19:24). In this city, almost wholly given over to idolatry, superstition, and vice, God manifested His power through Paul for the conversion of sinners and the confusion of the adversary (see Acts 19:8–12, 18–20).

Adversaries. When opposition arose at Ephesus, Paul did not leave the city, but worked all the more earnestly for the advancement of the kingdom of God. Such opposition may generally be regarded as evidence that Satan is alarmed at the threat to his dominion over the souls of men, and as an indication that the Spirit of God is at work.

10. Timothy. One of Paul’s converts and helpers in the work of God (see on Acts 16:1). He had been sent to the church at Corinth to help them with their problems (see on 1 Cor. 4:17). Paul sought to prepare the way for him by soliciting the hospitality and

kindness of the Corinthians on his behalf, so that the young Timotheus would not be embarrassed when called upon to instruct the influential believers in that important church.

11. Despise. Gr. *exoutheneō*, “to make of no account,” “to treat with contempt.”

Conduct him forth. That is, provide him with things necessary for the journey.

In peace. That is, with the good will of the Corinthians. Paul hoped that there would be no points of misunderstanding between Timothy and the Corinthian believers.

Look for him. Paul was awaiting word of the condition of affairs in Corinth (see on ch. 4:17). It was doubtless in Macedonia that Timothy met Paul, for he was with Paul when 2 Corinthians was written (see on 2 Cor. 1:1; cf. AA 323).

12. Apollos. See on Acts 18:24; cf. Acts 19:1; 1 Cor. 1:12.

Not ... to come. See on ch. 1:12.

13. Watch ye. That is, keep awake, be vigilant, as the sentries posted around the camp of an army are on the alert at every moment for the slightest suggestion of danger. The fact that this exhortation is found in several places in the NT emphasizes the necessity for the Christian to be on guard against the efforts of the enemy to destroy him (see Matt. 24:42; 25:13; Mark 13:35; Acts 20:31; 1 Thess. 5:5, 6). Here the admonition would have special application to the peculiar dangers that surrounded the Corinthian believers. They were to take care lest their salvation should be endangered by dissensions, false doctrines, false teachers, erroneous practices, and the prevalence of idolatry around them.

Stand fast in the faith. For a discussion of “faith” as here used see on Acts 6:7. Jesus warned that there would be many false teachers and false prophets, who would seek to turn people away from the purity of the gospel and to lead them to accept doctrines that originate with Satan (see Matt. 24:4, 5, 11, 23, 24, 26). There is need for strong determination to adhere unwaveringly to the unadulterated Word of God (see Isa. 8:20; Matt. 24:13; Phil. 1:27; 4:1; 1 Thess. 5:21; Rev. 2:10).

Quit you like men. Gr. *andrizō*, “to act like a man.” In earlier English “quit” meant “to conduct oneself.” To be a Christian requires courage, boldness, perseverance, fortitude—in short, all the qualities of a real man. There is no place for cowardice, timidity, or fear. A noble character is developed only by those who place themselves unreservedly under the Saviour’s leadership (see Eph. 6:10).

14. Charity. Gr. *agapē*, “love” as a principle (see on 1 Cor. 13:1; for the verb *agapaō* see on Matt. 5:43, 44). Love is the all-conquering quality, the grand solution to all problems. The counsel given here may be considered as the supreme feature of Paul’s instruction to the Corinthian believers and to all Christians everywhere at all times. Supreme love for God and unselfish love for men will abolish all strife, contention, pride, and associated evils (see Prov. 10:12; Matt. 22:37–40; Rom. 13:10). This basic attribute of the character of God (1 John 4:8) must activate every child of God, so that his life will be a demonstration of the power of love and a proof of the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ (cf. John 14:23; 15:9, 10, 12; 1 John 3:14, 18, 23, 24; 1 John 4:7, 8, 11, 12, 16, 18, 20, 21; 5:2).

15. Beseech. Gr. *parakaleō*, “to exhort,” “to admonish” (see on John 14:16).

House of Stephanas. An influential family whose members had been baptized by Paul himself (see ch. 1:16).

Firstfruits. That is, they were the first of a large harvest of souls in Achaia.

Achaia. A province of Greece made up of the Peloponnesus and the mainland of Greece, south of Macedonia. Its capital was Corinth.

Addicted themselves. That is, set themselves to the task.

16. Submit yourselves. That is, show deference and respect for those who are faithful in the service of the church. Their opinions and counsel should be looked upon as deserving of serious consideration. All who assist with the great work of God on earth are to be treated with respect and given whatever help they may need.

17. The coming of. The three messengers named were apparently all from Corinth. Fortunatus and Achaicus are not mentioned elsewhere. The three men were probably the bearers of the letter of inquiry from the Corinthians to Paul (ch. 7:1) and possibly also the bearers of Paul's letter to them known as First Corinthians.

Lacking on your part. The Greek expression means either "your deficiency," that is, your absence, or "lack of you," that is, lack on your part. Some suggest, in addition, that it may mean "your lack of me" as well as "my lack of you."

Supplied. Literally, "filled up." Compare the RSV translation, "they have made up for your absence."

18. Refreshed. The presence and conversation of these emissaries from Corinth had brought encouragement and consolation to Paul. They had apparently given the apostle information concerning the church in Corinth (v. 17), information that helped him to obtain a clearer understanding of the situation (see Prov. 15:30).

Acknowledge. That is, give recognition to.

19. Asia. See on Acts 2:9; see Additional Note on Acts 16.

Aquila and Priscilla. See on Acts 18:2.

Church ... in their house. The early Christians met in private homes. Church buildings were not common until about the end of the 2d century.

20. All the brethren. Doubtless, the believers in Ephesus. They were apparently interested in the church at Corinth and desired that their brethren know of their love and concern for them. The same spirit actuates all who love the Lord and His people; they are interested in all other members of the great family of God. This spirit of loving fellowship, prevalent among God's people, is a source of amazement to those who do not know the love of God, and is an evidence of the truth of the gospel (see John 17:23; 3T 446, 447; SC 115).

Kiss. A common form of greeting in the East. The holy kiss was a token of Christian affection among believers (cf. Rom. 16:16; 2 Cor. 13:12; 1 Thess. 5:26; 1 Peter 5:14). Paul seems to have desired the Corinthian believers to give this token to one another when they received his letter, as a pledge of their newly awakened Christian unity and love. The custom, at least as later enjoined in the Apostolic Constitutions (2:57; 8:11), was for men to greet men, and women to greet women. According to Palestinian custom the kiss was on the cheek, forehead, beard, hands, or feet, but not on the lips.

21. Own hand. Apparently Paul customarily employed a secretary to write his letters to the churches. He gave authenticity to the epistle by signing his name and expressing his greetings to the brethren (cf. Col. 4:18; 2 Thess. 3:17). This signature formed a proof that the contents of the letter were truly his, as well as an indication of his loving regard for the church. He had been troubled by those who had forged letters purporting to be his (see on 2 Thess. 2:2), and his personal signature was intended to foil the designs of such men.

22. Love. Gr. *phileō*, “to love with human affection.” For comparison with *agapaō* see on Matt. 5:43, 44. The meaning here is, “If any one does not even have human love for the Lord Jesus Christ.”

Anathema. A transliteration of the Gr. *anathema*, meaning “accursed,” or “devoted to destruction.” Those who do not believe in and love the Lord Jesus Christ cannot hope for salvation. By their own act of rejecting the only means of salvation, they choose eternal ruin (see Mark 16:16; John 12:48; Acts 16:30–32; 1 John 5:11–13; cf. Gal. 1:8, 9).

Maran-atha. A transliteration of the Gr. *maran atha*, which in turn is a transliteration of the Aramaic *maran ’athah*. The words should probably be separated as follows: *marana tha*, Aramaic *marana’ tha’*. This is the only place in Scripture where this word occurs. The Aramaic expression may be translated “our Lord comes,” or “our Lord, come.” The letter to the Corinthians was written in Greek, as were all the other epistles, but Paul was a bilingualist and familiar with Aramaic, the vernacular of the people in Palestine. As he reached the close of his powerful appeal to the Corinthians to abandon their factions, false doctrines and practices, and give themselves wholly to the Lord, he climaxed his arguments with this forceful pronouncement concerning the Lord’s coming. In the KJV this statement is attached to the preceding word “anathema,” but there is no necessary connection.

In the early days of the Christian church the expression “maran-atha” seems to have been used by the believers as a salutation (see Didache 10:6). The coming of Jesus should be the theme of every Christian’s life (see 6T 406; 7T 237; EW 58).

23. The grace. Paul closes his letter with the common benediction (see Rom. 16:24; 2 Cor. 13:14; Gal. 6:18).

24. Love. What more beautiful benediction could follow the severe denunciation of those who reject the love of God! This epistle, which contains much that might be regarded as rather harsh in its plain treatment of certain abuses in the church, is closed with an expression of love and of interest in the eternal welfare of the recipients of the letter.

The postscript following v. 24 appears in no early manuscript. Its contents are incorrect, at least in part, for they give the place of writing as “Philippi,” whereas the epistle itself gives the place of origin as Ephesus (ch. 16:8), although the postscript in one 9th-century uncial manuscript (P) reads “from Ephesus” instead of “from Philippi.” Inasmuch as the information concerning the place of writing is wrong, it raises a question as to whether Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus were the bearers of the letter to Corinth (see on v. 17). The postscript was a later editorial addition, not part of the original inspired record.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1, 2 CSW 129; 3T 398

2 AH 368, 389; CS 80, 81, 85; CSW 130; 1T 191, 206, 325; 3T 389, 411, 412; 5T 382

9 AA 286

13 CSW 180; Ed 295; GW 127; MH 136; ML 69, 319; MYP 24; 1T 370; 5T 584; 7T 236

⁸Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment*. Commentary Reference Series (1 Co 15:1). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.